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»39

up front

08 THE COUNTY

If you're a cop and you beat up a woman in her own home, don't forget to say you were "investigating something," reports R. Scott Moxley in Moxley Confidential. Meanwhile, the OCeeker, Josh Dulaney, praises himself some Lord at Santa Ana's Bethel Baptist Church, where he discovers that Dan Davidson is a fundamentally dandy preacher. And did someone just say Santa Ana? Hola, *amigos!* Gustavo Arellano drops some *conocimiento* in this week's ¡Ask a Mexican!

14 FEATURE

Does Long Beach have what it takes to become America's most bike-friendly city? Lots of green stripes on the road say yes, but history? Not so much, says Dave Wielenga, who notes that Orange County's hipster neighbor previously sought to re-define itself through such unlikely mascots as a "beached whale, an international beauty pageant, a British luxury liner and a gigantic fish tank."



MARY PASTRANA

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Nick Pinkerton asks, Is *Snow White and the Huntsman*, the latest fairytale retread, a snoozefest? Do dwarves come with matching beards and travel in groups of seven?

39 CULTURE

Dave Barton checks out the awe-inspiring art at the Santa Ana Artists Village's newest gallery, Q Art Salon. And what summer wedding is complete without a bunch of rented vintage furniture, wonders Trendzilla's Michelle Woo.

40 MUSIC

With his nasal delivery and deeply personal lyrics, rapper Mickey Avalon isn't the likeliest of hip-hop stars, but he does rock, writes Daniel Kohn. Reyhan Ali catches up with the math-rock whiz kids of Maps & Atlases. And Exene Cervenka has the answers to all your problems (punk rock and otherwise) in Ask Exene—now every week! Plus, Nate Jackson catches the reflections of Karma the Mirror for Locals Only.

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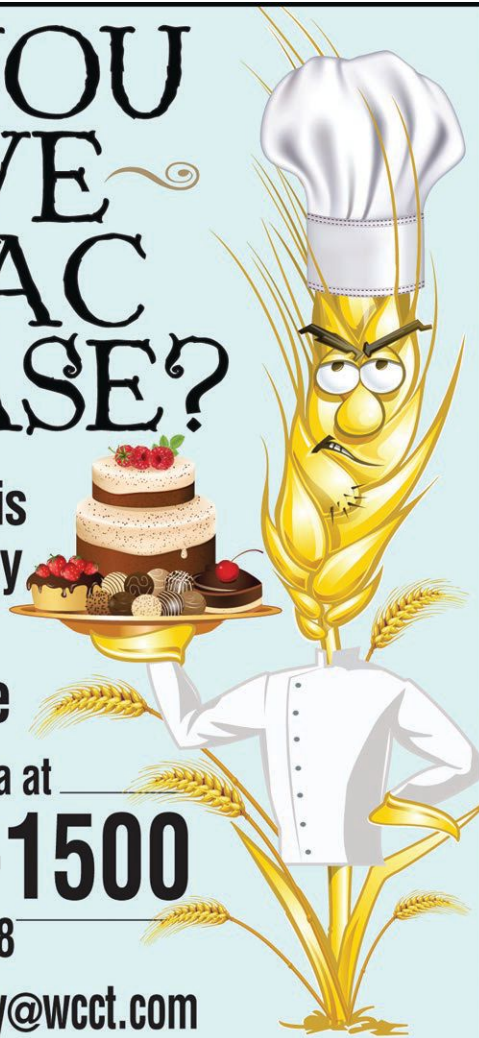
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Without smiling, Orange County Sheriff's deputies claim they attacked an OC mother in her home to save her

In *The Minority Report*, Philip K. Dick's 1956 science-fiction short story that became a 2002 Steven Spielberg blockbuster starring Tom Cruise, the police department finds a novel way to expand its powers. "Pre-crime" officers use three government-controlled human mutants—glorified psychics who can see two weeks into the future—and armed with precognitive reports, cops hunt down and arrest citizens for crimes that haven't occurred.

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Dick's tale may have seemed far-fetched decades ago, but few people know that Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSA) deputies now employ a modified precognitive system. Theirs doesn't involve mutants, but rather deputies relying on their own keen mental machinations.

Take, for example, the case of Nancy Butano. Just after 3 p.m. on Feb. 10, 2010, Butano was at her San Juan Capistrano home, lovingly watching her two, 20-month-old kids while handling an important business telephone call. She had no reason to suspect she was about to enter a police-state nightmare.

Sheriff's deputies Charles Henry Stumph and Cory Haruo Martino stood outside Butano's residence and saw a tall, 115-pound woman who wasn't armed, wasn't bleeding, wasn't screaming, wasn't jumping up and down, and wasn't calling for help. She was calmly talking on the phone. The deputies also knew that nobody had accused her of even shortchanging a parking meter.

In theory, the 4th Amendment of the Bill of Rights protects citizens from unreasonable police intrusions. Stumph and Martino didn't have consent or a search warrant to enter Butano's residence. But they knew that judges have carved holes in 4th Amendment guarantees; for example, they can evade the need for consent or a court order if they face an emergency.

According to Stumph and Martino, the scene with Butano presented a frightening crisis. The resident clearly had been on the verge of killing them, herself and her children or destroying evidence, they asserted. They'd also concocted the notion that an unknown assailant might have been lurking in the house with homicidal intentions against Butano.

Never mind the lack of any evidence; the deputies had covered their bets on the emergency excuse: Either Butano was going to kill, or someone was going to kill her. That's why, they argued, they could run inside the home uninvited, yell otherwise-illegal commands, assault a shocked Butano—kicking her down, giving her a black eye and a facial laceration, and violate state law by keeping her in custody at the Orange County Jail for more than 30 hours on trumped-up charges.

The police abuse that caused Butano (and her lawyer Jerry L. Steering) to file a pending federal civil-rights lawsuit didn't end there. With the deputies' help, government social workers took custody of her children for 11 days under the justification that she had abandoned them. Of course, the deputies were responsible for the abandonment when they unnecessarily took her to jail for the misdemeanor charge of interfering with their duties, charges that were later dropped as meritless.

The incident began when—unbeknownst to Butano—her boyfriend Paul Luddy left the back yard where he was cutting bamboo with a machete-type knife, walked to a neighbor's house, confronted gardeners who were using an obnoxiously loud leaf blower and walked away. The



PATRICK O'CONNOR

gardeners called OCSA about a possible criminal threat.

Deputies Stumph, Martino and Alexandra Flores, who was in training, arrived, talked with the gardeners and went to the Luddy/Butano house. Given that Luddy matched the description of the suspect, the deputies asked him to exit the house, put him under arrest and then placed him into their patrol car.

Butano, who'd been in the back yard with her kids, knew none of what happened. Later, when the deputies began ordering her to end her call, come outside and answer their questions, they didn't say there was an emergency. They told her to get off the phone. She told them to wait. That exertion of her constitutional rights pissed off the deputies.

In later depositions, both Stumph and Martino admitted that Butano was within her rights to not follow their commands before their entry. But, according to Stumph, he was free to interpret her noncompliance as an element to imagine a murder might be in the works.

Here's a key portion of transcript from an OCSA recording of the confrontation:

Deputy: Let's come outside, ma'am.

Butano: No, I am on the phone.

Deputy: Okay, listen.

Butano: I did not ask you to come in this house.

Deputy: Okay.

Butano: I'm busy right now.

Deputy: Okay, I'm going to tell you one time.

Butano: No! No! Don't touch me.

Deputy: Ma'am.

Butano: [being slammed down and manhandled] Don't touch me, asshole. [Cries of pain.] I can't believe you're doing this to me. [Cries of pain.] You're going to break my arm! [Cries of pain.]

Deputy: Get up! Stand up! Do you have anything illegal on you?

Butano: No. What are you doing to me?

Deputy: Just relax.

Butano: What's going on?

Deputy: We're here investigating something.

Butano: I can't believe you slammed me against that wall. I'm a girl, for God's sake.

Moments later, Martino turned to Deputy Flores and explained, "[Butano] wouldn't get off the phone. And we're like, 'Ma'am, get off the phone.' And then, like, we see a crossbow, and we're, like, 'Hey, get off the phone.' And she's, like, 'no,' and so Charlie starts chasing her and takes her down."

Please note that Martino didn't say he thought Butano was going to kill or that a mysterious hidden person was going to kill her—those claims came later. To help build their defense, the deputy also introduced the notion they'd entered the home because they saw a crossbow and feared for their safety. But that's a blatant lie. They couldn't have known of its existence until after they'd searched deep into the home. The crossbow, which had no arrows, was stored in a rear room that cannot be seen from the front door.

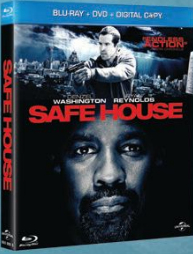
Despite the deputies' dramatic stories, there had been no emergency. The reason for the entry was simple and invalid: ego. Martino said it clearly to Butano after the arrest: "[The reason] you are in the back of my car [was that] I told you several times to get off that phone."

In his deposition, Martino amended his story. He said he entered the house because of yet another emergency: Stumph had gone inside, and he had followed to prevent Butano from harming him.

For his part, Stumph remains positive he prevented a potential murder. Though he didn't cite the psychic work of mutants, he claimed in his deposition that "I believe that Butano lured us" into her house "to possibly assault myself or Deputy Martino . . . [or kill] us."

In "The Majesty of the Law," former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor observed that the Bill of Rights "is part of the American contribution to the notion of justice and freedom." Our Founding Fathers' noble ideal will get tested with a likely cop-friendly Orange County jury at a scheduled September trial against the deputies. Until then, Butano isn't taking any chances. She moved her family out of state.

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» GUSTAVO ARELLANO



DEAR MEXICAN:
Why can't the United States and Mexico agree on one name for the Rio Bravo/Grande river? And I don't understand why the Americans *lo dice en español*?

Marfa Maven

DEAR WABETTE: The Mexican is a Californian by the grace of God, so he doesn't dare tread the intellectual waters of the Lone Star State unless absolutely necessary—recently, he declared Dallas as more influential in the course of Mexican food in this country than Houston and got holy hell from Houstonians while folks in El Paso and San Antonio snickered! Gotta love those *locos*. . . Anyhoo, I forwarded the question to Joshua S. Treviño, vice president of communications for the Texas Public Policy Foundation and one of the few conservative Mexis who doesn't give the Mexican Montezuma's Revenge. "This question is near and dear to my heart," Joshua writes. "Though the Mexican who usually answers your queries was born and bred in sunny Orange County, California, my family is from the Texas-Mexico borderland along the Rio Grande. My Treviño grandfather would swim in the river between his childhood home of Roma, Texas, and Ciudad Aleman, Mexico, on the opposite bank. Thankfully, he married a Laredo gal and lived the rest of his life in Texas — else my Treviños might have ended up like the most (in)famous Treviños today: senior enforcers in the Los Zetas narco-cartel.

"That's right, I wrote 'Rio Grande' above," Treviño continues. "That's what we call it here *en los Estados Unidos*—and it's just as proper to call it Rio Bravo del Norte when you're in Mexico. The dual name stems from colonial-era confusion about whether the upper and lower courses of the river were connected. In 1840, Mexican revolutionaries established the short-lived República del Rio Grande; the 1848

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the U.S.-Mexican War refers to the river demarcating the new boundary as 'the Rio Grande, otherwise called Rio Bravo del Norte.' In time, Anglo settlers in Texas adopted one, and Mexicans — perhaps inspired by the connotations of *bravo en español* signifying 'wild' or 'turbulent,' which aptly describe the region—adopted the other. Rest assured, this is the source of absolutely no confusion here. As for why we Americans say Rio Grande in Spanish, that must remain a mystery, unsolvable until we discern why we say California, Nevada, Colorado, Arizona, Florida, San Antonio, Los Angeles and San Francisco *en español tambien*."

Gracias, Joshua! The next breakfast taco at Torchy's in Austin is on me.

DEAR MEXICAN: What's up with the trucks full of mattresses and other junk headed south on the 5 and 405? Mexicans get a bad rap for being lowly laborers, but I think they're secretly engineers. It's the only explanation for the ridiculous loads they fit into their 1995 Chevrolet Dually pickups. Where the heck are they going, and what are they doing with all of our junk—taking it to TJ? Driving the old gas hogs they are, how can they make any money? I have asked other Mexicans I work with, but they said they don't know. . . They might not really be Mexican.

A Confused White Commuter From South County

DEAR GABACHO: Of course we're engineers! How else can you explain how we stuff 13 kids, four uncles, the *abuelita* and a hell of a lot of clothes in a truck for a trip to Mexico? Or how we stuff ourselves into car engines when we sneak back into the United States?

ASK THE MEXICAN

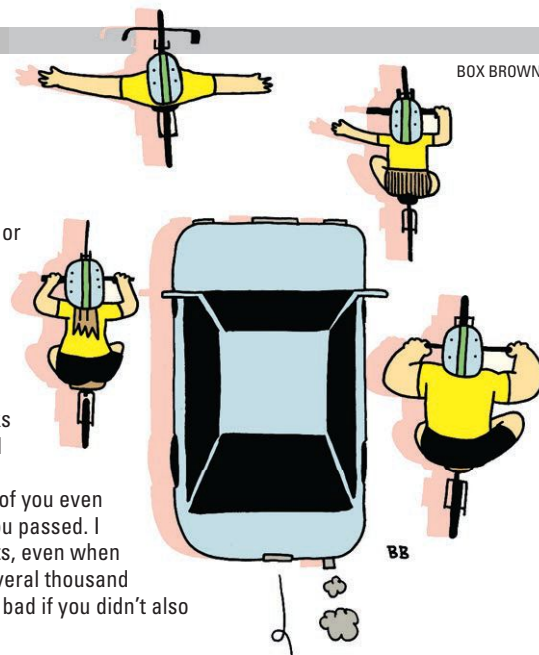
at themexican@askamexican.net, be his fan on Facebook, follow him on Twitter or ask him a video question at youtube.com/askamexicano!

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Mass Cycosis

You were the pack of about 20 or so cyclists riding north on Red Hill Avenue in Costa Mesa. I was attempting to exit a gas station at a busy intersection after a courteous motorist waved me in front of him. No doubt you saw me as you approached from blocks away. As I attempted to merge, all of you cut in front of me, dashing selfishly for the intersection. One of you even had the nerve to glare at me as you passed. I get it: Cyclists demand equal rights, even when sharing the road with vehicles several thousand pounds heavier. It wouldn't be so bad if you didn't also demand special consideration.



HEY, YOU! SEND ANONYMOUS THANKS, CONFESSIONS OR ACCUSATIONS—CHANGING OR DELETING THE NAMES OF THE GUILTY AND INNOCENT—TO "HEY, YOU!" C/O OC WEEKLY, 2975 RED HILL AVE., STE. 150, COSTA MESA, CA 92626, OR EMAIL US AT LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM.

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Dan Davidson Is a Dandy Preacher

And his Bethel Baptist Church is a great place for Scripture, no Churchianity chaser

God bless the Baptists. The ol' OCeeker had been growing concerned about the **Body of Christ** (that's Scripture-ese for "the church," ye heathen) in **Orange County** over the past few weeks, as it seemed every sanctuary he visited was peopled with believers who didn't own **Bibles**. Not at **Bethel Baptist Church** in **Santa Ana**. The OCeeker felt right at home there on a warm Wednesday night, when he took in some teaching from the warm-hearted **Dan Davidson**, pastor of the independent, fundamentalist, Bible-believing church.

Located a couple of miles south of the **405 freeway** on **Euclid Street**, the pale building with green trim is tucked behind a fence that discourages the riff-raff.

The OCeeker pulled into a spot marked for visitors, then promptly strutted into the sanctuary, where he was greeted by not one, but two kindly men, who took the time to shake his hand and introduce themselves. The congregation of about 35 saints was already in piano-and-hymn mode when the OCeeker's magnificent footfall graced the holy ground. Indeed, they grouped themselves on the right half of the sanctuary, leaving the left side empty, giving the patron saint of sexy ample room to spread wide his bronze and bushy thighs.

Under his foot lay green carpet that spread across the aging sanctuary, its white walls illuminated somewhat dimly by lights that hung down from the ceiling and decorated with flags of the world. (Bethel Baptist has a terrific missions program.) The wall behind the stage was painted sky-blue, with puffy little clouds added in, and a brown, wooden cross properly affixed. No goofy abstract paintings or too-cool sayings could be found, which brought back memories of the old times, before **American Jesus** sold out and went from holy to hip.

Based on **Nahum 1:7**, which reads, "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him," we sang "**God Will Take Care of You**," with the lyric "be not dismayed, whate'r betide, God will take of you." Word.

The hymn business finished, the elderly Davidson, who resembles actor and former **Republican** presidential hopeful **Fred Thompson**, took the pulpit and faced the right side of the congregation. He sported a jacket and tie, and he spoke with a honey-drip tone. The man's message was delivered with the tender care of a genuine shepherd, and big ups must be given to guys who are faithful to their calling these days, especially when they do so without any apparent desire to become **Churchianity** megastars.

Davidson gave an introductory message on the **Sermon On the Mount**, in which Jesus condemned self-righteousness before



OCEEKER
»JOSH DULANEY

pretty much going liberal on everyone's ass, with talk about loving your enemies and blessing those who curse you. The preacher man started with an

overview of the **Beatitudes**, which begin, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

Instead of blasting his church with commands to do what Jesus said (or else!), Davidson rather tenderly told them that **Christ** died to enable them to live out his teachings, that it's not something they can attain apart from an abiding faith and real relationship with God. He said the teachings of Jesus both elevated the righteousness required of God and demonstrated that the deity wants to produce an inward transformation that leads to outward demonstrations of true **Christianity**. The church today is marked by a superficial focus on self that is more concerned with what others think, rather than what God wants to do in the hearts of men, according to Davidson.

"Sometimes, I think we think we're so good at fooling people we think we're fooling God," he said. Yeyppum.

But unbelievers are drawn to Christ through the lives of those who truly follow his teachings, and they can sniff out the hypocrites, Davidson said. "The world is looking for real Christians today. They're not just looking for those who know about the Bible and have the information. They're looking for those who live the Bible... by demonstration." Hell, yeah!

It was a fine sermon, about 45 minutes long, and the OCeeker gave it four out of five church potlucks. Dan Davidson is a dandy preacher!

After the sermon, the preacher patiently listened to prayer requests, and we interceded for all manner of infirmities.

Now, there were only a couple of babes in attendance, which was not unexpected on a Wednesday night at a place called Bethel Baptist. One attractive lass sat alone for a bit before her dopey guy friend arrived and sat next to her. The OCeeker knows how to capitalize on the weakness of men who can't catch the prey, but alas, he had mercy on the poor fella and stepped lively to his car.

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BIKETOWN

LONG BEACH REINVENTS
ITSELF (AGAIN) BY
HITCHING ITS CIVIC
REPUTATION TO
CYCLING CULTURE



PHOTOS BY **JOHN GILHOOLEY**



USA?

BY DAVE WIELENGA

For more than a century, Long Beach has been tying swaths of its identity and chunks of its fortune to a succession of strange and incoherent events, icons and attractions—a box of chocolates that has included a beached whale, an international beauty pageant, a British luxury liner, an auto race and a gigantic fish tank.

Over the years, the collection—eclectic, artistic, eccentric or idiotic; you make the call—has provided can't-stop-looking insight into the chronic fantasy/inferiority complex that somehow seems to beset every generation of Long Beach leaders. The condition is typically driven by the conviction the city must pursue some kind of international profile or tourist draw to put itself on the map between Los Angeles and Orange County.

Recently, however, there are signs these symptoms are relaxing. There is evidence that Long Beach residents are increasingly aware and appreciative of the potential of their own city, an attitude manifested by the homegrown events that are blooming in neighborhoods across Long Beach, from First Friday's monthly party along Atlantic Avenue in Bixby Knolls to the retro-vibed collection of shops, bars and gen-

eral hipness that flourishes on Fourth Street to the massive insanity of downtown's Zombie Walk.

Into that mix now comes perhaps the most ambitiously transformative project yet. A consortium of city staff, professional consultants and particularly skilled residents is cultivating a wide-ranging but meticulously executed plan: to use bicycles as day-to-day transportation in and around Long Beach. The organizers are using federal grants to fund the infrastructure and the education. And the early returns—okay, they've been at this for three years, but when you're talking massive social change, that's early—look impressive.

Downtown is garlanded with dedicated bike lanes—created by taking a lane away from cars and tricking them out with their own traffic signals—that shepherd eastbound traffic on Broadway and westbound traffic on Third Street. In Belmont Shore, the crowded and colorful Second Street shopping district is accommodated by so-called “sharrows”: lanes shared by bikes and cars and identifiable by a stunning streak of green paint. Throughout the city are experiments in such traffic-calming techniques as bike boulevards and traffic circles.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 17





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And yet, there are some growing pains. . . . Aren't there?

Charlie Gandy, the preppy pied piper of Long Beach's bicycling mission, a guy who almost always has something *nice* to say, gets quiet. He has been at this a long time, and he defines his objective—social change—long range, and he knows that takes a long time. Gandy is careful. He's patient. But he also knows the value of a well-placed opinion. And besides, sometimes he gets pissed off.

Fact is, Long Beach's downshift into its burgeoning bike culture has been a little choppy—hasn't it, Charlie?

"It has been an extraordinary story," Gandy says with somber satisfaction.

And pauses.

"It's just that I am surprised at some of the institutions that have been so slow to embrace this stuff," he finally continues. "But there are people whose knee-jerk reaction is to be opposed to anything new."

He pauses again.

"I'm from Texas," Gandy begins again, "so I know a lot about backwater—and we're a long way from that. But people who resist change just because it's change? I find it frustrating in a city that's supposed to be an innovative city."

No doubt, a cross-section of Long Beach can constitute a tough crowd—highly suspicious, deeply cynical, reflexively negative—and many of them haven't kept secret their disapproval of the biking makeover, which has been expressed with rolling eyes, insults and anger. These people can be jerks, but their reactions probably aren't knee-jerk. Their emotions seem more complex than contrarian.

Long Beach has a history of big-concept projects that didn't pan out, and many still weigh on the city's ego and economy. Over time, these experiences tend to translate the language of opportunity into words of warning. It's a place where a proposal can feel like a con, a plan feels like a scheme, and an investment feels like a sucker's bet. And when these projects are rolled up in some fresh civic identity—icon, slogan, festival, whatever—it's doubling down on the misery. Resistance? This sounds like the recipe.

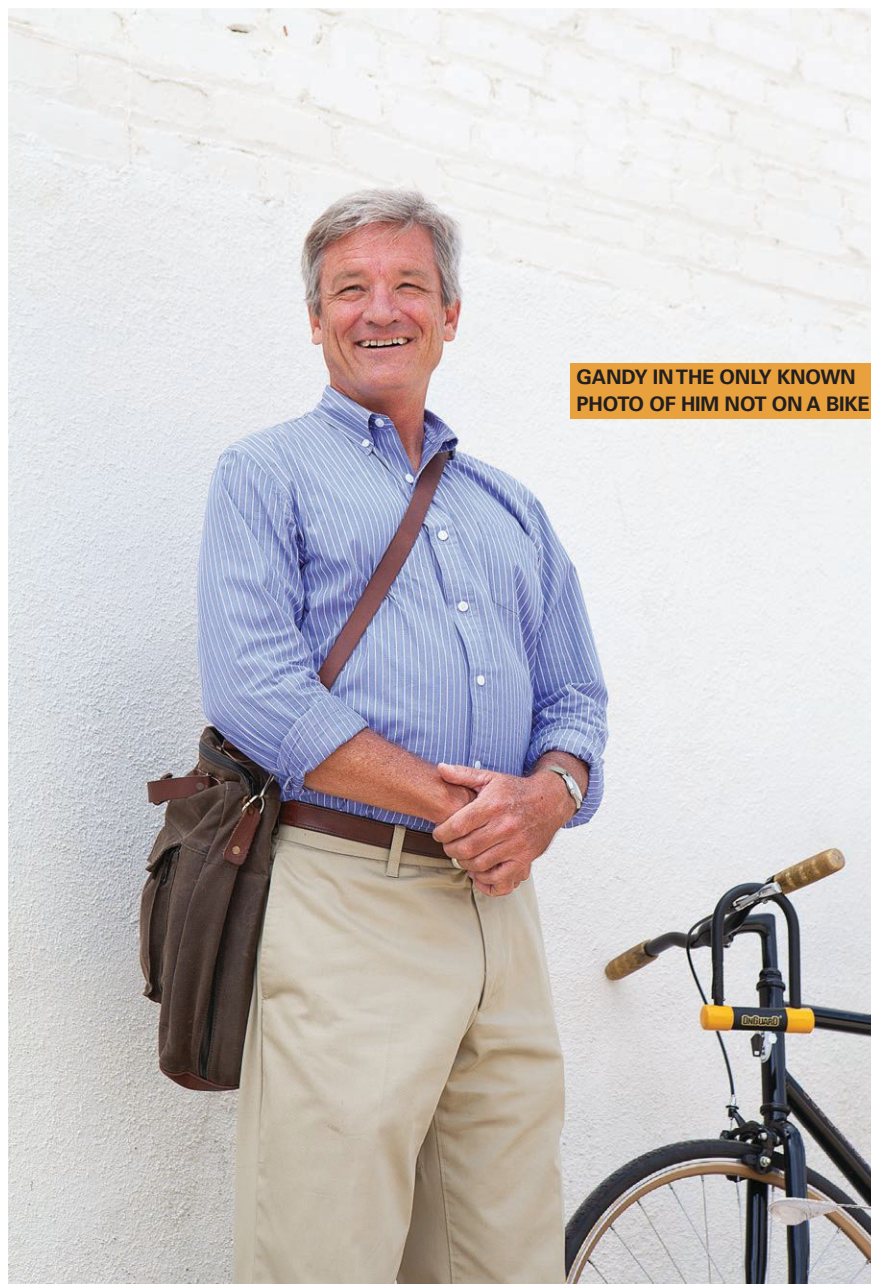
But at a moment when the people of Long Beach might be calmed and convinced by a clear and simple vision, they're getting a flashback to the old formula—the one that ties together those swaths of identity and chunks of fortune—combining the Long Beach brand with the bicycle project's goal with a slogan that seems to describe a double hallucination.

"Long Beach: The Most Bike-Friendly City In America."

Which, of course, isn't true.

Says Gandy: "Yet."

IT WAS about three years ago that Long Beach was first officially proclaimed the Most Bike-Friendly City In America. It happened at an April 2009 meeting of the Long Beach City Council, a notoriously fractious group that somehow transformed its governing duties into a christening ceremony of such audacious



GANDY IN THE ONLY KNOWN PHOTO OF HIM NOT ON A BIKE

CHARLIE GANDY, A GUY WHO ALMOST ALWAYS HAS SOMETHING NICE TO SAY, GETS QUIET. HE KNOWS [CHANGE] TAKES A LONG TIME. GANDY IS CAREFUL. HE'S PATIENT. BUT HE ALSO KNOWS THE VALUE OF A WELL-PLACED OPINION. AND BESIDES, SOMETIMES HE GETS PISSED OFF.

harmony that its vote on Long Beach's Most Bicycle-Friendliness was unanimous. Hardly anybody noticed.

Seven months later, it was a different story. When City Council members convened for the regular 5 p.m. start of their Nov. 17, 2009, meeting, so did a set of circumstances that drew the first big attention to Long Beach's Most Bike-Friendly City In America-ness. And the first critical responses.

It was the inaccuracy of the slogan's claim that created the problem. There was no proof that Long Beach's streets were any less dangerous or hostile than any other place in America. The proclamation somehow incited memories—or perceptions, anyway—of a Long Beach style of civic leadership out of touch with

basic responsibilities, not to mention constituents . . . and how about honesty?

On top of that, rather than being in council chambers at 5 o'clock to gavel the meeting to order, Mayor Bob Foster was outside the entrance to City Hall, milling around with the rest of the elected officials.

All of them appeared to be blowing it off. Each was paired with a bicycle, a prop for the portrait a photographer was nearly ready to shoot, and as a bank of lights washed the plaza in a movie-premiere glow, they chatted and posed for snapshots. Hanging above them—freshly bolted into City Hall's concrete wall over the weekend—was a sculpture of an iconic pennyfarthing bicycle, rendered by artist Patrick Vogel from parts culled from the police department's stolen-bike graveyard. It was underlined by a shiny metal banner engraved with those same eight words: "Long Beach, The Most Bicycle-Friendly City In America."

In quick succession, the photos were taken and the council members returned to their chamber to begin plowing diligently through the entire agenda, continuing long into the night. But the scene endured. It prompted online comments about unsavory ways city officials can play the system or constituents for perks. It revived memories of the *Queen Mary* operator who curried favor with officials by providing them with free use of the ship's facilities, usually for political fundraisers, but also for private parties. It ignited criticism of the Aquarium of the Pacific's rotating offer of access to City Council members, who can cozy up to constituents by providing free admission to residents of their districts.

But bad impressions went even deeper than that, creating the sense that this slogan had become the latest in the long

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



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BIKETOWN USA?
FROM PAGE 17

NO DOGGIE BIKES?

list of those employed over the years as synonyms for Long Beach. City leaders have always longed for a larger-than-life image. Evidence of their desperate search goes back at least to 1897, when a 63-foot finback whale strayed into shallow surf. A few of the locals killed it, picked its carcass clean and displayed the skeleton downtown at Lincoln Park, nicknaming the trophy "Minnie the Whale"; the editor of a local paper proclaimed, "Long Beach is now in possession of [a] wonder of the world." For most of the time since, Minnie's bones have been in the Los Angeles Natural History Museum storage facility in Vernon.

That's led to a lot of nicknames over the years: Queen of the Beaches, Iowa-By-the-Sea, Queen City, the International City, Many Unique Neighborhoods and One Great City, and now the one the bicycle folks just got.

Gandy concedes that Long Beach is absolutely not *the* Most Bicycle-Friendly City In America and insists deception was never the intention.

"The supporting theory is that it is an aspiration—the direction the city wants to go," he says. "I come from Austin, which in the early 1990s passed a resolution claiming it was the Live Music Capital of the World. That wasn't exactly the case at the time, but it certainly came true—Austin City Limits and South By Southwest are just the most obvious proof."

The payoff, Gandy says, has already begun for Long Beach's Bicycle Friendliness, attracting business partners, donations, volunteers and energy.

"It's served as an interesting magnet for unexpected opportunities, businesses stepping forward to ask what they can do to support us," he says. "That's the magic of that big, hairy goal."

He makes a case for the bicycle project based on reasons ranging from environmental benefits to the generation of business and tourism to improving Long Beach's profile as a great city. The Most Bicycle-Friendly City In America designation may be magical, but it doesn't

seem quite so imaginative when you realize the City Council's unanimous vote to claim it as Long Beach's brand came only six months after its unanimous vote in late 2007 to market Long Beach as the Aquatic Capital of America.

But approving the aquatic title didn't require the City Council to look any further than its pitchmen, the passel of old, rich, yacht-club members so influential they arranged for the city's Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine to prepare their PowerPoint presentation. Most were friends of Chris Pook, founder of the Long Beach Grand Prix, and some were board members of the Long Beach Sea Festival that Pook had been running for the city—in fact, running without a contract, thanks to then-city manager Jerry Miller, who disobeyed explicit orders from the council to do that favor.

The Aquatic Capital of America designation was such a done deal that the council seemed ready to ignore the most obvious problem with the name—the then-raging controversy over the Long Beach Breakwater, which had made the city aquatically famous for turning its waterfront into a bedpan.

Finally, council member Rae Gabelich made a delicate attempt. "I would think this is a wonderful thing for us to strive to become," Gabelich began, before cautioning that the title might come across as a little "self-serving" and suggesting that using it to market the city "would be a little disingenuous" at the moment.

"I'm wondering how Miami, Orlando or Fort Lauderdale, or even San Diego, would feel about us taking that on and adopting it for ourselves," Gabelich speculated.

Council member Gary DeLong—currently running for Congress in the 47th District—jumped right on that one with a calculated cluelessness intended to blow questions of ethics out of the water. "I think what they would think is, 'Darn, I wish we had thought of it first,'" DeLong said.

Clever.

But Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske was next, and she had no interest in

"SHARROWS" IN ACTION



wordplay, instead taking the point-missing straight to its illogical extreme. "What would San Diego and others think?" she asked, then answered, "Who cares?"

Actually, Schipske showed she cared a little bit about what other cities might think, specifically in case they think about using the "Aquatics Capital of America" title, too. She recommended Long Beach trademark the name.

MEANWHILE . . . um . . . Long Beach? Biketown USA? Buried deep beneath a budget deficit, surrounded by recession, the city is all a-buzzing—and okay, all a-bitching, too—about a major civic cycling makeover that puts it in the conversation about where everybody goes next. Where did this come from?

"It wasn't me," says Gandy. "I was attracted to Long Beach because the people I met here had their act together."

Gandy met a lot of people—big surprise—including council members Suja Lowenthal and Robert Garcia, Andrea White-Kjuss and John Case of Bikestation, and publicist Melissa Balmer. They were a cross-section of politicians, activists, insiders, business owners and a lot of folks who like to ride bikes. Gandy is especially focused on that last category.

"Like Saul Alinsky says, 'Only two things are powerful in politics: organized money or organized voices,'" Gandy offers. "My job is to organize the voices of the cyclists to be heard in the political process."

In this case, the voice of one cyclist in particular was already pretty well-heard in Long Beach's political process. In fact,

it's fair to wonder—and people certainly do—how much Long Beach's focus on bike culture can be traced to the fact that city manager Pat West is a cyclist.

Yet once those voices are heard, the conversation can go anywhere. The movement being enabled by this bicycle makeover has no limits, either. It ain't just about bikes—but nothing's going to get very far without them.

It's about the story a clean, convenient and local bicycle-transportation system will tell about Long Beach.

"It's a narrative that's attractive to young people and people with disposable incomes," says Gandy.

It's about the options that will be created by the bike-share systems that will soon be installed.

"The people at the Convention and Visitors Bureau are very excited," says Gandy. "They see it as a way to get convention dollars."

It's about the opportunities that can be created and increased for existing businesses through the needs that will be created by all the active lives.

"It's called economic gardening—instead of only trying to bring new companies into the city, we look at the businesses that exist and support those that can expand quickly," he concludes. "When those people start making money, they aren't likely to move. It's all about finding people with talent and passion and supporting them." ☐

Dave Wielenga is a longtime Weekling and publisher of GreaterLongBeach.com. Reach him at davew@greaterlongbeach.com.

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SUNDAY
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YOU'LL EVER BE

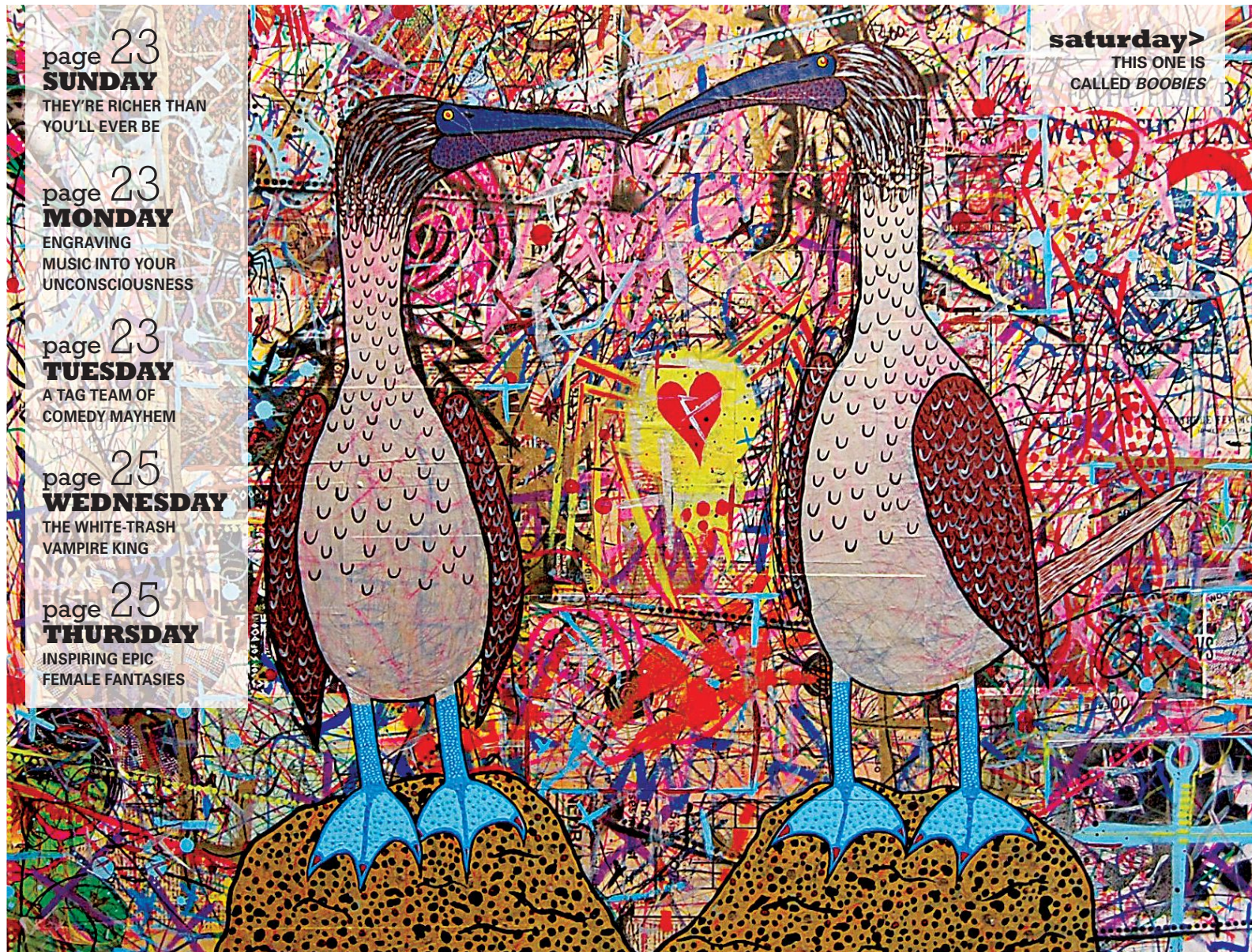
page 23
MONDAY
ENGRAVING
MUSIC INTO YOUR
UNCONSCIOUSNESS

page 23
TUESDAY
A TAG TEAM OF
COMEDY MAYHEM

page 25
WEDNESDAY
THE WHITE-TRASH
VAMPIRE KING

page 25
THURSDAY
INSPIRING EPIC
FEMALE FANTASIES

saturday>
THIS ONE IS
CALLED BOOBIES



ROBERT "STICKY" SHAW

***calendar**

fri/06/01

[FESTIVAL]

Hips and Ships CAIRO CARAVAN

It didn't happen in *Treasure Island*, it didn't happen in the *The Pirates of Penzance*, and it certainly didn't happen in any of the Johnny Depp *Caribbean* flicks—but now the fiction must be righted because what should have happened in all those swashbuckling sagas finally does: belly-dancers take over the ship! Specifically, they gyrate their bejeweled navels aboard the *Queen Mary* for the Cairo Caravan, a three-day festival of exotic vendors, henna artists, Middle Eastern food, belly-dancing workshops and, most important, a panel of legendary belly-dancers from the '60s and '70s. We're digging harem-scarem pants out of our treasure chest as we speak.

Thirty-fifth Annual Cairo Caravan aboard the *Queen Mary*, 1126 Queens Hwy., Long Beach, (562) 435-3511; www.mecda.org/cairo. 4 p.m.; also Sat.-Sun. \$10-\$35. —STACY DAVIES

[THEATER]

The Precious *The Hobbit*

Filmmaker Peter Jackson could have saved himself a lot of time and money by foregoing his long-winded adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy in favor its predecessor, *The Hobbit*. As we write, we can hear a cacophony of fan boys cursing us in Elvish. Sorry, fellas, but *The Hobbit* was all we ever needed, and we're finally getting it—Jackson's film version is currently in production. To the point and succinct, it offers everything the trilogy does—Orc battles, wizardry and Gollum—without the need for a complex bathroom-break schedule. While you're waiting for the cinematic version, head to the Maverick Theater for a live reimagining of the one novel to rule them all. If that's not enough to tide you over until the film premieres, the message boards will be waiting when you get home.

The Hobbit at Maverick Theater, 110 E. Walnut Ave., Fullerton, (714) 526-7070; www.mavericktheater.com. 8 p.m.; also Sat. Through July 14. \$10-\$20. —BRANDON FERGUSON

sat/06/02

[ART]

No Holds Barred 'LOVE KILLS' OPENING RECEPTION

One thing I definitely admire is an artist who unabashedly exposes his or her soul, both the bright and dark parts—public judgment be damned. Meet Robert "Sticky" Shaw, the first artist to partake in AR4T Gallery's summer "commotion/camaraderie/uproar" series. His visions are shattered ones—canvases consist of love letters, vintage newspaper clips saved by his father, concert bills, streaks of paint and maybe some dried blood. His inspiration comes from a broken heart, alcohol and drug abuse, Sid, Nancy, and cutting, a destructive habit from his past that Sticky doesn't hide. This opening is as raw and honest as it gets, punk rock in its truest form.

"Love Kills" Opening Reception with the Lovely Bad Things at AR4T Gallery, 210 N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach; www.ar4t.com. 6 p.m. Through June 23. Free. —ERIN DEWITT

[THEATER]

Virtual Reality *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow*

Jennifer Marcus is the heroine of *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow*, a comedy written by Rolin Jones. The play, however, isn't about human evolution, as conventional wisdom might suggest. Instead, the adopted, 22-year-old, Chinese-American girl and maniacal computer genius decides to embark on a brave adventure to find her biological

mother. But Marcus isn't the one traveling to China; instead, she sends her robotic replica, Jenny Chow—whom Marcus controls from her bedroom thousands of miles away. Feelings of rejection by her adopted mother and a crippling case of obsessive-compulsive disorder and agoraphobia drive her to realize her goals—but there are unintended consequences she must face along the way.

The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow at Long Beach Playhouse, 5021 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 494-1014; www.lbplayhouse.org. 8 p.m. Through June 16. \$24. —YASMIN NOUH



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sun/06/03

[CONCERT]

Fun, Fun, Fun

The Beach Boys'

50th Anniversary Tour

Been so long, says the song, so let's get together and do it again—and so for the first time since at least the '80s, Brian Wilson is reunited on the road with Beach Boys co-founders Al Jardine and Mike Love, and all those unhappy days discussing whether a certain someone should fuck with the formula are long forgotten. This is huge for anyone who likes the Beach Boys (or music or just being happy they're alive). It's as close to momentous as a Beatles reunion, even though they're probably not gonna push much past the hits. And even that's okay. That something such as "Good Vibrations" or "God Only Knows" could come out of a bungalow in Hawthorne evokes Kurt Vonnegut: "No matter how bad things get, the music will still be wonderful."

The Beach Boys 50th Anniversary Tour at Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre, 8808 Irvine Center Dr., Irvine, (949) 855-8095; www.livenationa.com. 7 p.m. \$32.50-\$112.25. All ages. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

[FESTIVAL]

To the Streets

TUSTIN STREET FAIR
AND CHILI COOK-OFF

Consider the street closure, with detour signs and orange cones, and behind it the bacchanal of feasting, costumes and dance—when our need for celebration trumps street traffic, commerce and the predictable order of our repressed lives. Barbara Ehrenreich wrote about exactly this in her book *Dancing In the Streets: A History of Collective Joy*. That generations-old sociological experiment and road show in liberation arrives in Old Town Tustin with its annual chili cook-off, bringing nostalgic displays of empty bravado such as the organized frivolity of watermelon-eating, jalapeño-eating and beer stein-holding contests, and—because we're freer than before—both women's and men's hottest legs contests. Needless to say, there are libations aplenty, and yes, the event is free. As in freedom.

Tustin Street Fair and Chili Cook-Off at El Camino Real and Main Street, Tustin, (714) 573-3326; www.tustinchilicookoff.com. 11 a.m. Free. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

mon/06/04

[CONCERT]

Sweet Emotion

The Head and the Heart

Think about all the bands who've traveled through Southern California. How

many are never heard from again? The list is endless. But this Monday, hear a Seattle-based band you won't forget, as the Head and the Heart will engrave their music into your unconsciousness. This isn't a neo-grunge sound that aches with apathy; this band have, well, heart. They blend an old-timey sound with a modern singer/songwriter appeal—if you like the Avett Brothers, Dawes or Wilco, then this show is not to be missed. Songs such as "Down In the Valley" and "I Get Lost in My Mind" tear up the radio with the perfect mix of deep lyrics, nuanced compositions and complex harmonies. It's the sweet science of logic and emotion, of feeling and structure, of the mind and the soul.

The Head and the Heart with the Moondoggies and Husky at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com. 8 p.m. \$20. —JOE LAPIN

tue/06/05

[COMEDY]

Punch Lines

Refried Tuesdays

Refried Tuesdays, the weeknight chuckle fest circulating among Southern California's Improvs, arrives in Brea this

week, and wielding the mic is the hysterical duo of Richard Villa and Aurelio Miguel Bocanegra. And here's a fun tidbit: Villa, a member of the Groundlings Theatre Group and alum of the Combat Comedy Tour (for which he performed for troops in several countries), is working on a sketch-comedy show titled *Border Patrol Tales*, focusing on the impact of Mexican immigrants. Controversial? Probably. Hysterical? Pretty damn sure. But in the meantime, check out his standup performance at the showcase that's catapulting him forward.

Refried Tuesdays at Brea Improv, 120 S. Brea Blvd., Brea, (714) 482-0700; www.improv.com. 7:30 p.m. \$12. 18+.

—ERIN DEWITT

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wed/06/06

[CONCERT]

Straight From Hell

Unknown Hinson

He's got kitsch appeal, a cult following, raucous guitar skills—and he ain't afraid of your husband; he'll be over tonight. Heralded as Find of the Year by *Rockabilly Magazine*, Unknown Hinson is that

perfect mix of sketchy carnie, white-trash vampire and psychobilly king. Go ahead and ask Hank Williams III; he has Unknown's mug tattooed on his arm. We especially love his honky-tonk camp: "I Cleaned Out a Room (In My Trailer for You)" and "I Make Faces When I Make Love." It won't take long for this show to

turn riot—so get to Alex's early. Or catch Unknown Hinson as he voices Early on *Squidbillies*. So awesome.

Unknown Hinson at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexbar.com. 8 p.m. \$18-\$20. 21+.

—ERIN DEWITT



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ing of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Stephen Spielberg's 1981 film that inspired epic female fantasies known as the Indiana Jones series. As our hunky archaeologist travels the world wearing a leather jacket and a fedora, hunting for his woman and attempting to save the the lost Ark of the Covenant, a relic foretold to hold the key to humanly existence, he discovers some valuable lessons about life, love and livin' dangerously in the name of science. Swoon as he cracks his whip, and imagine how you'd comfort him in the presence of snakes.

Raiders of the Lost Ark at the Bay Theatre, 340 Main St., Seal Beach, (562) 431-9988; www.baytheatre.com. 8 p.m.; also Wed. \$5-\$8. —AMANDA PARSONS



Scene Stealer

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD

Few characters become so iconic their popularity manages to span multiple generations. Tales of Robin Hood, an outlaw and leader of an army of Merry Men, began during the Medieval Period as part of European folklore, but have since become a popular subject in American cinema. Based on ancient legends of the man known for stealing from the rich and giving to the poor, the first screenplay was developed in 1938 and titled *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. Screened as part of the Bowers Museum's Great Screen Icon Series, the film is followed by a discussion led by Michael Berlin, Ph.D., a film expert, screenwriter, producer and director.

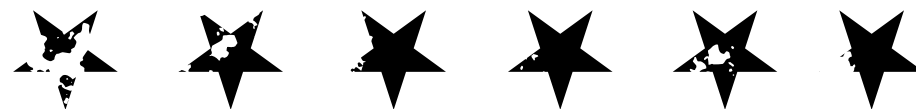
Great Screen Icon Series: *The Adventures of Robin Hood* at Bowers Museum, 2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana, (714) 567-3677; www.bowers.org. 1:30 p.m. \$7-\$10. —JESSICA FORD

[FILM]

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thu/06/07

[FILM]

Oh, Indy!

Raiders of the Lost Ark

Many afternoons are spent either watching movies or pondering the meaning of life. Combine both activities with a view-

Out of the Bleu

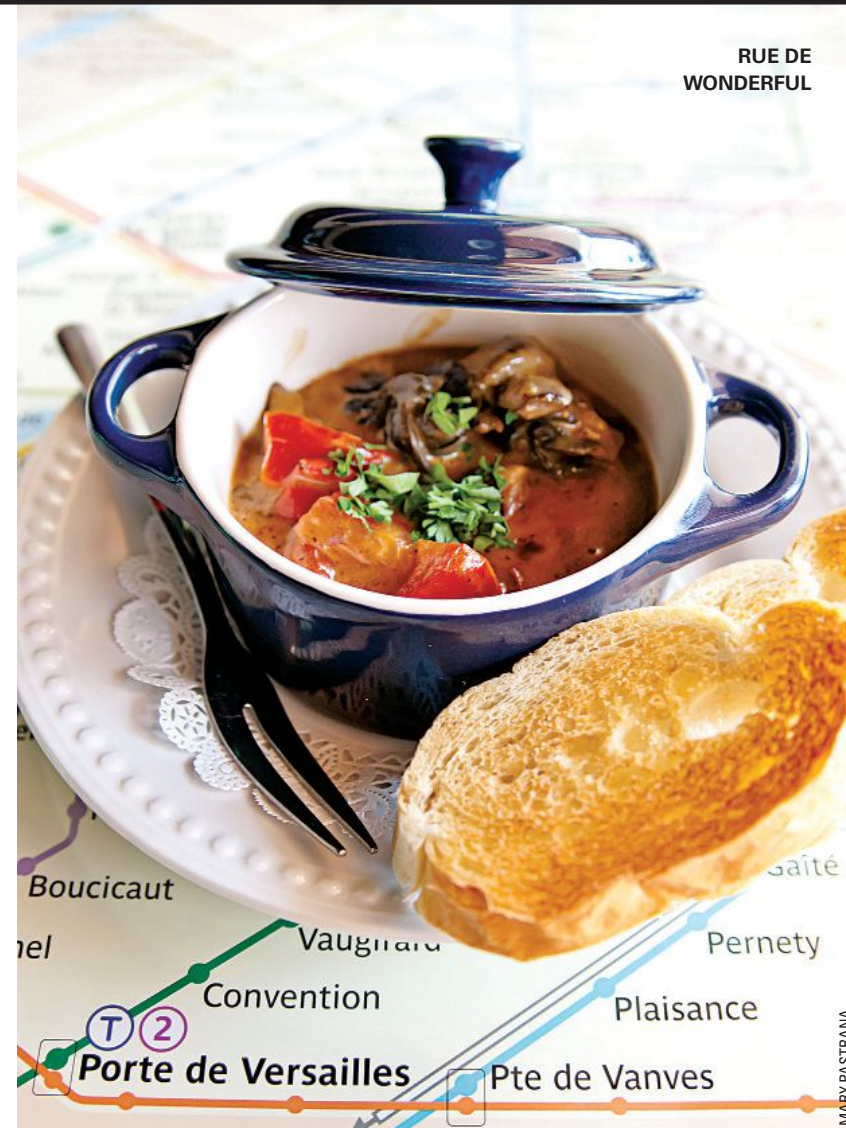
The Cellar's previous executive chef opens an inexpensive French restaurant
BY EDWIN GOE

If you opened a French restaurant, you, too, would have the songs of Edith Piaf playing so that her rich-as-foie-gras voice could float through the air. You, too, would hang a poster of Toulouse-Lautrec's iconic portrait of Aristide Bruant, his face defiant and proud. David Kesler does it because he can no longer rely on the moody atmospherics of the Cellar in Fullerton, where he toiled for nearly a decade as its executive chef. Now on his own, Kesler's mission statement for his new restaurant sounds like a rebuke of his previous employer: He says he's out to offer "French cuisine without the high prices, sub-par food and pompous attitudes."

Even still, there's only so much he and his wife, Pam, can do with posters and blue paint to make you forget that the place used to be Sal's, the long-lived, red-checked-tablecloth Italian joint it replaced. When you dine at Bistro Bleu, you're keenly aware you're in the real Anaheim, the one that might as well be on the other side of the world from Disneyland. Zankou Chicken is down the street, there's an old-school A-framed Wienerschnitzel within spitting distance, and the cluster of mini-mall businesses it neighbors includes a liquor store and an auto-repair shop with signs painted in block letters so big and gaudy they can be seen by passing satellites.

You can't blame the Keslers for trying everything they can. They've set two tables on the sidewalk because that's what a French bistro would do everywhere else—never mind that the view of the blighted parking lot is significantly less scenic than the Champs Élysées. They've even hired an actual Frenchman as one of the servers, with an accent lifted seemingly from *Gigi* yet the real deal. Fortunately, the same can be said of the prices. With all the renovations he has done, Kesler is most interested in decoupling the exorbitance from French cuisine, pricing most of his dishes in the \$15 range. It's just a coincidence that I was at Brasserie Pascal only a week prior for a review of their foie gras dinner (see "A Foie Farewell," May 25), but comparing dinner receipts from the two French restaurants was eye-opening. Pascal Olhats charges a Fashion Island-appropriate toll of \$9 for his French onion soup; Kesler does it for \$4. I much prefer Kesler's, not just because it's half the price, but because it does at \$4 what all French onion soups do: The crouton sinks and softens; the caramel-colored broth murmurs the sweetness of the melting onions; and the Gruyère spoons out in webs so stretchy people around you might think you're eating noodles.

The decent and basic \$9 charcuterie plate includes a rectangle of homemade pâté and little toasts to spread it on. The \$6 escargots is presented simmering in



RUE DE
WONDERFUL

a mini-Dutch oven as a Provençal stew, with garlic, tomatoes, mushrooms, parsley, white wine and a splash of crème fraîche. There's no need for any shell-gripping contraptions or even a tiny fork. In fact, there is no table setting. Silverware here is crammed into Mason jars; the napkins are made of paper; and when you order wine by the glass, servers fill it to the brim.

Just as at Brasserie Pascal, you should order the soufflé at least a half-hour in advance. But at \$6, Bistro Bleu's automatically distinguishes itself as the most reasonably priced in the county. Though Kesler's soufflé is a shade lighter than Olhats', it's also fluffier and comes with a soupier chocolate sauce that doesn't overpower the delicateness of its tenuous existence as an air-puffed brownie. And yet the same kind of formality precedes the soufflé here as it does at any Michelin-starred place: A server will cut a small hole at the top with a spoon, then pour the sauce and send dollops of cream down the well.

Bistro Bleu is not yet perfect. A coq au

vin seemed over-reduced one evening, needing every bit of the buttered pasta to mitigate its saltiness. And the steak frites I ordered medium came out nearly raw; it was pre-sliced and draped in a sauce it didn't need, with a pat of chilled, herbed butter that took its sweet time to melt. Despite missteps that would indicate the barely month-old restaurant is still calibrating, Kesler has done exactly what he set out to do: French food, stripped of arrogance and high costs. You'd be an elitist if you so much as complain that the French fries he serves are the same as those at every corner burger joint. He cooks them crisp and serves them hot, and if you have a problem with that, then perhaps you deserve to pay more elsewhere.

BISTRO BLEU

918 S. Magnolia Ave, Anaheim, (714) 826-3590; www.bistrobleudining.com. Open for lunch, Tues.-Fri., noon-2 p.m.; dinner, Tues.-Wed., 5-8 p.m.; Thurs.-Fri., 5-9 p.m.; Sat., 1-9 p.m.; brunch, Sun., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Dinner for two, \$30-\$50, food only. Beer and wine.

HOLE IN THE WALL

» GUSTAVO ARELLANO

Roman Holiday

RENATA'S CAFFE ITALIANO

227 E. Chapman Ave., Ste. F, Orange, (714) 771-4740.

More than a decade ago, I had dinner at Renata's Caffe Italiano in Old Towne Orange while a student at Chapman University. I don't remember the circumstances, the occasion, or who I was with—all that stays with me is the memory of a great meal, of a pasta perfectly sauced, calamari properly crispy, fine wine and a touch of romance. There had to have been a girl involved if I remembered the candlelight dinner and affordable prices—and I must've gotten lucky if I still have fond memories.

And then I ignored Renata's. It wasn't intentional—it was just that I had a new job as a food critic for this infernal rag, and the restaurant's old-school Italian didn't seem too thrilling in a county where Vietnamese, Middle Eastern and even regional Mexican cuisine was, for me, a revelation. Every time I passed by the place, I wondered if it remained as good as I remembered it—couldn't be, I figured. Must've been a college-age delusion. Yet I always asked friends if they had visited, if they enjoyed the place. All confirmed, with the most honest—our own Dave Lieberman—putting it thusly: "Their specials from Rome are awesome; stay away from everything else."

Business took me back to the ol' alma mater a couple of weeks ago, and the opportunity to eat at Renata's on someone else's dime presented itself. It was as charmingly dowdy as I remember it—faded murals, beat-up menus, faux fountains on the covered patio and a hellish soundtrack of Celine Dion covers. The wait-staff was attentive when it wasn't forgetful, the wine list still short but workable. And Dave was right: The regular food was largely so-so, but the specials were grand.

Renata's is a café at war with itself, knowing it must hew to the sub/spaghetti/fettuccine/lasagna cartel in order to ensure the rent; those dishes, while fine, are better made and cheaper elsewhere. So stick to the dishes unfamiliar to our American knowledge of Italian food. While polenta is somewhat known, it's definitely not usually conceived of as Renata's polenta romana, perfectly formed blocks of the stuff standing over a shallow pool of a creamy sauce spiked with what tasted like Chianti—spectacular. There's also a pasta dish, the name of which I can't remember and that's not familiar to the Italian-American restaurant canon, with chunks of pancetta crisped as though chicharrones—amazing. I'm now going to Renata's regularly, making up for all that lost time. If only it would dump the tried-and-true entrées for those magnificent specials, then it'd become a county institution instead of Old Towne's secret. In the meanwhile, that just means more specials for me and you. Hint: Go with anything that has "roma" in its name. . . .

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Fanfare for the Uncommon Chef

Ryan Adams of Three Seventy Common Kitchen + Drink

When interviewing a chef at his or her establishment, there's always the possibility we'll be interrupted by one of the staff, cutting our meeting short. In the case of Ryan Adams, it was quite the contrary. He assured us that interruptions wouldn't occur in Three Seventy Common Kitchen + Drink's private dining room (a.k.a. the Whiskey Room). Surrounded by barrel-aged Manhattan, we discussed his collections, Uncommon Mondays and more.

Your earliest food memory:

I have fond memories of picking green beans in the garden, and then cleaning them with my grandmother.

Favorite meal growing up:

The comfort and aroma of homemade chicken-noodle soup—no canned soup for us.

Your best recent food find:

Clay Oven in Irvine, where you can eat your way around the different regions of India.

Most undervalued ingredient:

Braised, fresh local greens such as kale, collards and chard. They're delicious, healthy

ON THE LINE

» ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

and quick to cook. Plus, they complement the flavors of so many other ingredients. *Who came up with the drink board? It's a brilliant idea!*

I agree and must admit I borrowed the idea from the guys at Lola Gaspar. *We read you personally pick the vegetables for Sunday Supper at the Laguna Beach farmers' market. Is what you find the basis of your menu, or do you have an idea before you arrive?*

We usually have an idea before we go to the market, but we always wind up adding or subtracting something depending on what looks great and availability. And we always go to the OC Great Park Farmers' Market on Sunday mornings for any last-minute items.

Last place you had a good, bloody rib-eye (besides your own kitchen)? At Del Rae in Pico Rivera.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

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Fanfare for the Uncommon Chef

» FROM PAGE 28

Culinarily speaking, Orange County has the best:
We have some fantastic spots for Vietnamese food, as well as a few great Thai restaurants. *What fast food do you admit to eating?* In-N-Out Burger because its food is good, consistent and I can get it until 1 a.m. *What is your beverage of choice, and where do you get it?* A great, classic gin and tonic made by me. *Tell us about Uncommon Monday.* This visiting-chef series on select Monday nights was created to give chefs whom I highly respect a chance to come into my kitchen and showcase a new concept or new menu ideas for our guests at Three Seventy Common. I also created Uncommon Mondays to introduce people in the community to new, talented chefs and their talents. Basically, it's just for all of us to have fun. *Did we read something about you and vintage knives?* Yeah, I'm kind of a collector type. I've been collecting vintage kitchen tools for some time, and I have amassed quite a collection of kitchen knives. *One food you can't live without and why:* Sriracha hot chile sauce because I like the taste and the distinctive way that it imparts zing, zest and heat to food. *Where was your most recent meal?* Japanese food at Honda Ya in Tustin, and what didn't I have would be the better question! *Best culinary tip for the home cook:* Don't be afraid to use salt—it's a terrific flavor enhancer. *We spy grilled fish and roasted chicken on the kids' menu. Are they clearing their plates?* Yes, happy to report they are. Both parents and their kids love the fact they get a whole meal served on a vintage mess-hall tray that is healthy and great-tasting. *Favorite chef:* British chef Marco Pierre White—also known as the godfather of modern cooking—was and still is a kitchen renegade. *What's the most time-consuming dish on the menu to create?* The shepherd's pie. It's a four-day process. Day 1, we season it all and let it cure overnight. The next day, you sear up all the pieces and braise it. Day 3, you make the sauce. On the last day, you assemble it. Ours is like a veal stew, and we make a country mashed potato on top. *Weirdest thing you've ever eaten:* Balut, a Filipino delicacy that is basically a fermented dead baby chicken with bones. *Favorite places to eat (besides your own):* Marche Moderne, the Crosby, Lola Gaspar, Honda Ya and a whole bunch more as well. *If you weren't such a mean kid growing up—breaking windows, scuffling with kids, doing kitchen duty as punishment—do you think you'd still be a restaurateur?* This is a tough question for me. I really like what I'm doing and am not that interested in other jobs, careers or pursuits at this point.



You're making breakfast. What are you having? Egg sandwich, over-medium egg on multigrain toast, slice of cheese, pesto prosciutto and arugula. *Weirdest customer request:* It was to go home with her, and it didn't happen. *When you're not in the kitchen cooking, what are you doing?* Sleeping or cleaning my house and doing laundry. Oh, eating out somewhere. *Name your favorite classic country and speed-metal artists:* Johnny Cash, Hank the First, Shooter Jennings. As for speed metal, Slayer, of course. *Do folks ever mistake you for a certain singer/songwriter?* Yes, I get phone calls all of the time asking if I am Ryan Adams, the songwriter. My response is "If I were, do you think you would be talking to me right now?" *Where did you grow up?* The Laguna Hills/Laguna Niguel area. *Hardest lesson you've learned:* Humility. *What's your favorite childhood memory?* Surfing at Salt Creek on a cold fall morning, with the steam rising off the water and a swell of 4 to 6 feet rolling in, and the wind is perfectly still. That day is still ingrained in my memory. I was 16. *Tell me about a favorite vintage car.* My favorite is the Pierson Brothers 1934 Ford Coupe. It was known as the coupe that beat the roadsters. [Fun Fact: His car was on the cover of Hot Rod magazine last month.] *What were you up to five years ago?* Running nine-and-a-half restaurants in Southern California. *Where do you like to surf?* All over, but I grew up surfing at Salt Creek. *Do you have any skills that are non-food-related?* Welding, construction, gardening and metal fabrication. *What would you be doing if you weren't in this business?* I would say either a race-car driver or a scout sniper.

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El Rey del Sur

Carlos Valdez is the king of Baja California Sur cuisine at his Buffalo BBQ

For decades, Baja California Sur has been defined—unfairly—by Orange-County-on-the-Sea-of-Cortez: Cabo San Lucas, where American spring breakers go to suck down margaritas, eat nachos until they burst, perform graceless acts at wet-T-shirt contests, and develop pre-melanoma lesions under the warmth of the Baja sun. During the three-year media blitz that has descended upon Baja California, the southern half of the peninsula has stayed on the sidelines—or so it would seem.

I first visited Buffalo BBQ in La Paz back in 2009 and was impressed by the thick cuts of Sonoran beef cooked on a Santa Maria-style grill and the excellent hamburgers, but the menu lacked depth—most of the interesting items were off-menu. In the years since, Sonoran-born chef Carlos Valdez has grown into a formidable master. I had the opportunity to visit Buffalo BBQ this past March, and he blew me away with his Sonoran grill and Baja cuisine, a style he calls BajaSon. Valdez is the best Baja chef you haven't heard of and is set to reign in Baja California Sur—and, hopefully, beyond.

Valdez comes from Ciudad Obregon, Sonora, where carne asada is as serious as mole in el Valle de Oaxaca; carnitas in Quiroga, Michoacan; or barbacoa in Tulancingo, Hidalgo. Sonora also has the distinction of hosting the greatest surf-and-turf culture in Mexico, thanks to its huge cattle industry of healthy Angus steer and the seafood treasures from the Sea of Cortez. Valdez began a Sonoran-style surf-and-turf restaurant 10 years ago as a frustrated civil engineer longing to be a professional grill man in La Paz, the most exciting food destination in Southern Baja California. He has never had any formal training—he's completely self-taught.

He mans his custom grill like a ship's captain orchestrating a daring maneuver at sea; he even keeps at least one eye on it when he lets the only other chef he allows near his baby take over. Valdez breaks away from socializing frequently to give instructions as a massive, 2-kilo cabreria (bone-in, beef tenderloin) is set down, one of his favorite cuts. The beef isn't sourced from Hermosillo's Rancho 17, the famous supplier of northern Mexico cuts to top restaurants in Mexico City and Baja California, but from a small ranch in Ciudad



PHOTO COURTESY OF CARLOS VALDEZ

¡TIJUANA Sí! » BILL ESPARZA

Obregon called Rancho Los Olvidados. He is the only customer at this family-owned ranch, which supplies tender Angus beef cut to Valdez's specifications.

But somewhere along the way, this simple grill master and Sonoran seafood cocktiller acquired a taste for luxurious Baja products: geoducks, chocolata clams, oysters, and a variety of fish and shellfish. Buffalo BBQ's five-clams ceviche is an explosive combination of local clams with a smooth, peppery citrus-amaranth potion. Valdez can rattle off the nearby islands from the Sea of Cortez, where the sea treasures—geoducks along with the clams known as reinas, chocolatas, blancas islenas and roñosas—came from. Baja chefs are the best seafood cocktillers in Mexico, and this ranks with the most memorable ceviches I've encountered. Not to mention the fact La Paz is the best place in Mexico for the coveted chocolata clam, a rare gem with red and white meat covered in a chocolate shell; it's so good it'll have you second-guessing the higher status given to oysters. *From a May 24 Stick a Fork In It post.*

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Meal for Two at Chicken Box



NIYAZ PIRANI

EAT THIS NOW

» NIYAZ PIRANI

When a restaurant has been around so long, putting out consistently great food the entire time, it's easy for us food writers to forget as we're searching for the next best thing.

That's the whole point of this column, of course, but it's especially so when it comes to Chicken Box, tucked away in freeway-free La Habra. For 39 years, this one-room shack has

been slingin' fried chicken that bests sorry KFC on flavor and shames Mrs. Knott's on value. The best bet is the chicken meal for two (\$11.98), which includes six pieces of chicken—two legs, two thighs, a breast and a wing. The bird is broasted for a light, nearly greaseless crust; a cross between pressure cooking and deep-frying, the method renders the chicken's flour-dredged skin as crispy as a Lay's chip, with a crunch that maintains after 20 bites (I counted). And a brine makes the meat flavorful and juicy.

If you're partial to wedges, try the broasted potatoes. The skin on each fat stick crackles before yielding a steaming, pillow-y inside that's awesome with Ranch dressing. There's a choice of salad (go with creamy coleslaw) and warm rolls with butter and honey. Chicken Box's special isn't an everyday meal, neither for the arteries nor to save on gas, but one that is worth the trip every time. *From a May 23 Stick a Fork In It post.*

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DRINK OF THE WEEK

» GUSTAVO ARELLANO

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We have a modest cocktail bar at the *Weekly World* Headquarters—some tequila, mezcal, wines, vodka and bourbon. Everyone is free to drink anything, with one rule: If it's unopened, you can't open it until I do. I have kept some bottles for sentimental reasons, reasons I quickly forget after about a week, upon which time I crack open the bottle.

It's a generally kept rule, save for the bourbon pirate earlier this year who opened a bottle without my permission and slowly drank its contents, mocking me all the way. YOU BAS-TARD!!! I left a cryptic note on the bottle promising Masonic torture if I ever discovered the thief's identity, which must've worked somewhat: While the pirate finished off the bottle of Elmer T. Lee (I still keep that empty bottle, as a reminder of the depravity of mankind), he or she left the bottle of Eagle Rare Single Barrel bourbon alone—and thank God for that, as it's a great Kentucky juice.

THE DRINK

It has a clean, strong scent, and the texture is thin, not the thicker makeup of Maker's or Woodford Reserve. But Eagle Rare settles on your palate perfectly—peppery, a bit of toastiness from sitting for 10 years in charred oak barrels, not as sweet as its competitors because it leans toward bourbon's fiery side. The bottle recommends sipping it, but this Eagle Rare would make a killer Manhattan with its sharp edge and ability to cut clear through the vermouth and ice. Now I know why the office bourbon pirate didn't plunder this bottle: It's a *man's* bourbon, and that scoundrel was a LOSER. ... *From a May 25 Stick a Fork In It post.*

EAGLE RARE SINGLE BARREL BOURBON is available at Hi Time Wine Cellars, 250 Ogle St., Costa Mesa, (949) 650-8463; www.hitimewine.net.



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Tasting Notes:

Both nose and palate display lush tropical and stone fruit (white pear) scents and tastes, with good amounts of wood spice and river rock minerality. Balanced & beautiful, great for sun or shade!



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June 2012



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Snow Job

The latest addition to the *Snow White* collection is a tale overtold
BY NICK PINKERTON

If ever there were a perfect example of pure, fresh, classical simplicity unnecessarily trodden under with complications, it is *Snow White and the Huntsman*.

Had it trusted the native charm of its cast and the sensory seduction of its often-astonishing images to humbly, naively retell its story, this *Snow White* might have been something special. Instead, it's defined by an overall bagginess that betrays a lack of any abiding authorial pattern. Commercial director Rupert Sanders is credited with his first feature here, but producer Joe Roth is the name above the title, and the rampant, pricey production design is given such star treatment it's almost awkward when the actors butt in.

Things start off at a fleet pace, as opening exposition tells of the immaculate royal birth of Snow White, her mother's death, and the seduction of her father and conquest of his kingdom by mantis-like adventuress Queen Ravenna (Charlize Theron), who marries her way to the throne, then drives the king's threateningly fair daughter, grown-into Kristen Stewart, into exile. An unruly subject, Huntsman Eric (*Thor*'s Chris Hemsworth), is sent into the Dark Forest to finish Snow off, while Prince William (Sam Claflin), who remembers the princess from her girlhood, likewise sets on her trail. Both are duly ensorcelled by Snow's charms, along with seven digitally dwarfed character actors (Toby Jones? Bob Hoskins? Ray Winstone?), whose appearances are basically a distracting game of "Oh, *that's* who that is!"

ANTICIPATING THE AUDIENCE'S REACTION



This last spring's competing *Snow White* film, Tarsem Singh's *Mirror, Mirror*, played the Grimm Brothers as camp, turning the evil queen, played by Julia Roberts, into a stock-comic character: The vain, aging diva, dictator of a royal court that was a tacky mishmash of opulent styles. *Snow White and the Huntsman* is a far graver treatment of the material. Theron's evil queen is an apparent relation of Countess Elizabeth Báthory, the Hungarian noblewoman who, according to legend, bathed in the blood of virgin girls to retain her youth. The setting is a palpably lived-in late-medieval universe of scrofulous peasantry and pervasive under-the-fingernails murk and mire, where everything onscreen has a conceivable use and looks used. The same detail applies to the fantasy aspects of Snow's world:

The Dark Forest, a writhing tangle veined with bare-limbed branches, is alive with all things that slither and skitter, while a dulcet, flower-carpeted Eden called the Sanctuary is as vividly imagined.

Around the same age that they're usually hearing fairy tales for the first time, children have a tendency to compulsively ask "Why?" questions: Why wasn't Sleeping Beauty warned about the spindles? Why does the woodcutter let Hansel and Gretel's stepmother push him around? The script for *Snow White* seems to anticipate this sort of grilling and provides answers in spades.

The result is a film that's considerably longer than it needs to be, in which the evocative eloquence of storybook pictures is consistently garbled by the need to overexplain and psychoanalyze. The

Huntsman, we learn, was driven to drink by his wife's death. The evil queen was warped by a mother who taught her that beauty was her only attribute and by the misuse of fickle men. In the final confrontation between Snow and her stepmother, we even get a hint of Electra complex rivalry ("Come and avenge your father, who was too weak to raise his sword"—a subtext of ye royal impotence?) Amid all the film's visual ornamentation, there's no sense of narrative priority—the filmmakers can't see the Dark Forest for the trees.

Among *Snow White*'s extraneous and diluting elements, we must include the addition of a vague romantic rivalry between the brawny huntsman and dashing prince, which seems to have been more thoroughly considered from a marketing perspective than from a dramatic one—for it is proven box office to place *Twilight*'s Stewart at the apex of a love triangle between a beefcake and a lithe, aristocratic pretty boy.

Giving a fiery call-to-arms speech to a mass of assembled troops in a third act that has her essentially transformed into Joan of Arc, Stewart is miles outside her range, but she remains a great existential screen presence. There are a number of "supercuts" floating around YouTube that mockingly catalog Stewart's mannerisms—the sideways glances, the lip gnashed with the Chiclet overbite—but what the compilers fail to recognize is that many of our finest classical film actors have made brilliant careers from a single, essential expression. If only this *Snow White* had Stewart's capacity to just be itself—or at least to know what it is.

SNOW WHITE AND THE HUNTSMAN was directed by Rupert Sanders; written by Evan Daugherty, John Lee Hancock and Hossein Amini; and stars Kristen Stewart, Charlize Theron and Chris Hemsworth. Rated PG-13.

opening

BATTLEFIELD AMERICA C-list R&B singer Marques Houston jumps on the money train of the modern family film with *Battlefield America*. In the film, which Houston co-wrote with director Chris Stokes (Houston's manager), the singer plays arrogant businessman Sean Lewis, who's sentenced to community service after a DUI lands him in front of a no-nonsense judge. Lewis has to work off his hours at a community center (run by a drop-dead gorgeous woman, natch) where a motley crew of smart-mouthed grade school boys dream of winning the upcoming street-dance battle competition. He's to be their coach. Yes, the boys and Lewis hate each other on sight; his initial meetings with the center's director are prickly; Lewis slowly learns what's important in life; the boys learn to love him; he gets the girl/woman. It's all boilerplate, so these are not spoilers. While it's grotesque to see pre-teens stomping in underground warehouse-battle settings, at least the racial politics are interesting. Those run from lamentable (some of Lewis' ribbing of his Asian charges) to subversive, as the film reflects real life by positioning Lewis' crew (largely black, with two Asian kids) as the underdog in a subculture forged by African Americans and Latinos but where blackness is all but erased, and the scene is now largely dominated by white and all-Asian crews. But don't fear; that's all subtextual. The film's real lesson is more palatable to the American palate: Believe in yourself, and you'll win. (PG-13) Ernest Hardy. AMC Orange 30, Orange.

SNOW WHITE AND THE HUNTSMAN See "Snow Job," page 35.

ongoing

THE AVENGERS At the start of the Marvel superhero supergroup flick, the Tesseract—a powerful glowing cube that fell to the ocean floor after Captain America (Chris Evans) liberated it from the Nazis in his movie last summer—is captured by Loki (Tom Hiddleston), brother of demigod Thor (Chris Hemsworth) and villain of 2011's *Thor*. Ass-kicking Girl Friday Natasha Romanoff (Scarlett Johansson) and eye-patched S.H.I.E.L.D. agent Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson) gather a motley crew to get it back, including Tony Stark/Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.), Bruce Banner/Hulk (Mark Ruffalo), Captain A., and Thor. Writer/director Joss Whedon first showed his talent for long-form storytelling in TV's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. On *The Avengers*' comparatively minute canvas, Whedon effectively creates a sketch of a working universe, but the most Whedon-esque parts of the script are the flippant wisecracks that the fucked-up superheroes toss off as knee-jerk self-defense in life-or-death situations. What worked as the cool diffusion of stakes in *Buffy* here underlines the lack of suspense to the mission: We never get the sense that any of the heroes might not survive to snark again. The four main male *Avengers* at least combine to form a varied gallery of masculine neurosis. The women fare less well: Gwyneth Paltrow's Pepper Potts has just one dialogue scene. Johansson is the only actress given any sort of inner life to work with. *The Avengers* hints that this former Russian spy has a backstory rife with transformative drama, suggesting an arc that's much more interesting than anything the characters travel here. (PG-13) Karina Longworth. Countywide.

BATTLESHIP Every once in a while, a movie comes along that's so utterly

shameless that it achieves a certain grandeur. Peter Berg's *Battleship*, which I swear to God is described in its Wikipedia entry as an "American science fiction action naval war film," is one such movie. Over the past few years, the military-industrial-entertainment complex has been going great guns, with salutes to the Army (fellow Hasbro production *G.I. Joe*), Navy SEALs (*Act of Valor*), and now this \$200 million hail to the fleet, which takes up the unusual task of extrapolating a story arc from that game with the little red plastic pegs, principally remembered as being easy to cheat at. During the RIMPAC naval exercises in Hawaii, the Hopper brothers—loose cannon Alex (Taylor Kitsch) and straitlaced Stone (Alexander Skarsgard)—along with Rihanna, naturally, find themselves their nation's only line of defense against space invaders who've splashed down in a few crafts, quite reminiscent in their intricately shifting movable-parts design and metallic cacophony to leftover Hasbro *Transformers*. Peter Berg, creator of *Friday Night Lights* and director of the estimable *The Rundown*, is in street-fighting mode here—that is, he does not hesitate to pull any dirty trick in order to get the job done. When the F-14s came out for a triumphant flyover, I looked around the room to find the moron who was applauding only to realize that it was me. (PG-13) Nick Pinkerton. Countywide.

BERNIE The script for *Bernie* was in part dictated from the stand: In a 1997 murder trial in Carthage, Texas, Bernhardt "Bernie" Tiede, a closeted ex-mortician, confessed to the shooting of his benefactress, 81-year-old millionaire widow Marjorie Nugent, 43 years his senior. In Richard Linklater's movie version, Shirley MacLaine is Nugent, by almost all accounts a sour and unpleasant woman, clutching her purse like a flotation device. Matthew McConaughey is district attorney Danny Buck Davidson, and Jack Black plays Tiede, tackling his duties as church-choir soloist and community-theater impresario, in a performance remarkable for its ability to be at once flamboyant and remote. Dangling ambiguities around the case and Black's melancholy, finicky characterization make *Bernie* a chafing, rock-in-the-shoe kind of movie—and I mean this as a compliment. *Bernie*'s true-crime narrative is further complicated by its bit players, a mix of Texas actors and actual townsfolk whose voices provide a chorus of documentary-style direct-address commentary that's a lovingly compiled glossary of Texan vernacular speech. In its multivalent perspectives, *Bernie* is all about irreconcilable facts and foggy motives, not least the contrary demands of forgiveness written in the Bible and the stern punishment written in the law books. It is the rarest of rarities: a truly unexpected film. (PG-13) Nick Pinkerton. Countywide.

THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL The British have practically cornered the multiplex's senior demo (think *Waking Ned Devine* and *Calendar Girls*) and look to be continuing the run with *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, a recent hit with the U.K.'s aging boomer set, now stateside. Reliable middlebrow craftsman John Madden (*Shakespeare in Love*) makes neat work of Deborah Moggach's novel about a group of disparate British retirees lured—for cut-rate surgery, low-overhead living, or reasons they hope to keep private—to the Indian subcontinent, where they find themselves together under the roof of the titular hotel. The cast is led by Dame Judi Dench as a long-sheltered widow looking to stand on her own two feet. *Marigold Hotel* has that oh-so-tactful

British touch, the seeming result of an industry-wide gentleman's agreement never to go too far. The material is ribald but, of course, never crude and sewn with "Life begins at 60" affirmations; the plot twists are about as venerable as the cast and predictably affecting when performed with such old-hand proficiency. Although the film is overextended by a few plotlines too many, you'll look forward to Tom Wilkinson's turn as a retired high court judge who still goes fluttery over the memory of an affair from schoolboy days and Bill Nighy as a shy, ineffectually decent man, quietly surprised by how nimble he becomes in this new atmosphere. (PG-13) Nick Pinkerton. Countywide.

CHERNOBYL DIARIES Warner Bros. and producer Oren Peli will spare nothing to conceal the shocking secret at the heart of *Chernobyl Diaries*. Spoiler alert: The movie is toxic waste. Based on a premise by *Paranormal Activity* director Peli, *Chernobyl Diaries* tags along with a group of American backpackers visiting Kiev—the usual boring actors giving boring readings of boring dialogue, which constitutes our contemporary conception of realism. Signing up for a guided "extreme tourism" trip to Pripyat, the worker's city left abandoned after the Chernobyl disaster, they find themselves abandoned and trapped in a no-man's-land, which they soon discover is not precisely uninhabited. Save for a couple of sequences, *Diaries* doesn't adopt the now-ubiquitous camcorder footage premise, but the one-of-the-gang POV handheld camerawork is still deliberately amateurish enough to keep lurking threats just on the edge of visibility, a strategy that is later furthered by nighttime shooting with slashing flashlights as, after a fair job of sustaining suspense, the chase commences outright. It has been argued that the essence of moving pictures is motion, the medium's capacity for visceral excitement, but if this 90-minute rundown is "pure cinema," than the whole medium wouldn't amount to much more than a barrel ride. (R) Nick Pinkerton. Countywide.

CHIMPANZEE Disney's latest Earth Day release hunkers down in an Ivory Coast rain forest, taming its beasts-in-the-wild raw material into a family-friendly (though not totally sugarcoated) heroes-and-villains adventure, as did the brand's previous film, *African Cats*. *Chimpanzee* follows energetic young primate Oscar, still reliant on his mother, Isha, for food and protection. Conflict arrives via a fruit-and-nut-based turf war: Local alpha male Freddy leads his charges against an enemy faction of chimps, headed by the sinister-sounding Scar (echoes of Mouse House favorite *The Lion King*). During one interclan dustup, Isha goes missing, leaving Oscar to fend for himself. Strictly from a nature-doc angle, *Chimpanzee* is impressive stuff. Directors Alastair Fothergill and Mark Linfield get up close as the chimps go about their daily routines (grooming one another, cracking open nuts, hunting monkeys); the filmmakers also nicely depict their animal subjects' domain through occasional teeming-forest time-lapse and sweeping views above the canopy. The burden of massaging the natural-habitat footage into an intelligible rival-families narrative, though, falls to the voiceover script. Throughout, narrator Tim Allen shuttles between a jokey primer on chimp society and a basic play-by-play during the more action-packed scenes—the constant stream of explanation often detracts from the heart-of-the-jungle sights and sounds. (G) Benjamin Mercer. Countywide.

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Brandon Routh neither looks nor convincingly acts the part of an upstate New York Native American in Crooked Arrows, a flaccid fable in which Routh's casino owner Joe learns to honor his ancestors and "the Creator" through lacrosse. In order to get reservation council approval for his business' expansion, Joe agrees to coach a rag-tag Native American prep school team. Totemic talismans, "animal spirits," and eagle allegories are all treated with solemn reverence by director Steve Rash, whose film is predicated on a rote lesson about the preeminent value of heritage and the baseness of capitalistic greed. Despite referring to the tribe as "my people," Routh is wholly miscast, yet his ill-fitting presence is part and parcel of the plotting's general illogicality, as when Joe finds himself exhausted after a race against his players, and immediately afterwards is seen shirtless and in peak physical shape. Rash's celebration of cultural history also involves pitting Joe's team against a squad of evil rich white kids who, it's implied, have stolen lacrosse from its originators and rightful owners. Meanwhile, the repeated employment of hoary sports-movie tropes and Chumbawamba's "Tubthumping" prove unpleasant reminders of a past with which no one needs to reconnect. (PG-13) Nick Schager. *Regency Rancho Niguel, Laguna Niguel.*

DARK SHADOWS *Dark Shadows* slips the "Tim Burton treatment" to the supernaturally themed daily daytime soap of the same name, which aired on ABC from 1966 to 1971. Burton standby Johnny Depp fills the central role of vampire Barnabas Collins in this new film version, which begins with a prologue that reveals the origin of the Collins curse. Leaving Liverpool, a still-mortal Barnabas arrives with his parents in Colonial-era Maine, where they build a commercial empire and establish the family seat, Collinwood Mansion. As a young man, Barnabas is torn between two loves—lowly servant Angelique (Eva Green) and hypergamous fiancée, Josette (Bella Heathcote)—and winds up with neither, for the spurned Angelique practices black magic, hexing Josette to death and Barnabas to endless suffering as a vampire, imprisoned in a chained-up coffin and buried (eternally) alive. The bulk of *Dark Shadows*, however, takes place in 1972, after Barnabas has been accidentally exhumed, to resume the head of his dysfunctional family of descendants. More than its gothic tropes, Burton's *Dark Shadows* is committed to fish-out-of-water material—culture-clash humor that rummages through the collective thrift-store memory of the '70s and relies on slow-pitch, wasn't-the-past-dumb humor. In the midst of all this is an unusually dandy bit of dress up from Depp, weaving his elongated Nosferatu fingers through the air, recalling 1994's *Ed Wood*. That movie is still by far Depp and Burton's best collaboration, exhibiting the balance of tone, between campy parody and zealous fantasy, that's missing in *Dark Shadows*, less a resurrection than a clumsy desecration. (PG-13) Nick Pinkerton. *Countywide.*

DARLING COMPANION "Animals are such agreeable friends—they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms," George Eliot once wrote. That's certainly the appeal of Freeway, a stray mutt rescued by Beth Winter (Diane Keaton), unhappily married to overweening, distant surgeon Joseph (Kevin Kline) in *Darling Companion*. The handsome pooch is also the only appealing aspect of the latest tale of privileged boomer pulse-taking from

Lawrence Kasdan, who co-wrote the script with his wife, Meg (they last collaborated in 1991's *Grand Canyon*). When, early on, the dog goes missing at the Winters' Colorado vacation home—where they have just hosted the wedding of their younger daughter, Grace (Elisabeth Moss)—his absence cues frequently unendurable scenes of recriminations. Beth blames the hound's disappearance on her husband, who was distracted by a work phone call while walking Freeway, and he accuses her of neurosis and not loving him enough. Added to the marital-woes cacophony is the mumbo jumbo uttered by resort caretaker Carmen (Ayelet Zurer), a Roma psychic who often begins each sentence with, "My people have a saying . . ." The Winters form a search party with wedding guests who stayed behind, including Joseph's sister (Dianne Wiest), her boyfriend (Richard Jenkins), and her son (Mark Duplass). In their healing treks through the woods, feelings are processed, snobbery leveled, and happiness restored. (PG-13) Melissa Anderson. *Edwards Westpark 8, Irvine.*

THE DICTATOR In *The Dictator*, Admiral General Aladeen (Sacha Baron Cohen), dictator of fictional North African nation Wadiya, travels to New York to defend Wadiya's nuclear program to the U.N. Aladeen's brother (Ben Kingsley) attempts to sell him out, hiring a goat-fetishizing look-alike (also Baron Cohen) to serve as Aladeen's double in a plot to exploit Wadiya's oil. The real dictator escapes his scheduled assassination and ends up outside the U.N. in bum garb, leading the gathered protesters in a cry against the "illegitimate" leader addressing the assembly inside and drawing the attention of Zoe (Anna Faris), a crunchy Brooklyn activist who mistakes Aladeen for a dissident and welcomes him into her refugee-staffed Williamsburg food co-op. Previous Baron Cohen characters Ali G and Borat were genius because the comedian immersed himself so totally while thrusting himself out into the real world and into contact with unsuspecting strangers. *The Dictator*, by contrast, exists purely in movie world: There's no interaction with "real" people. Baron Cohen reportedly stayed in character between takes, but I'm not convinced he stays in character during takes. The role doesn't seem to amount to much more than an imprecise, inconsistent accent and a played-for-laughs proclivity for rape, in a film dedicated to the rehearsal of culture-clash stereotypes that generally fail to unearth anything new about any of the cultures involved. (R) Karina Longworth. *Countywide.*

FIRST POSITION The nonfiction formula pioneered by *Spellbound* leads to frustrating superficiality in *First Position*, a glossy documentary about a multicultural collection of young bal-

let dancers striving to secure awards, scholarships, and job contracts at the prestigious annual Youth America Grand Prix. Director Bess Kargman adheres to a now-familiar template in which glib portraits of various talented kids from around the world provide human-interest background for the central competition, which in this instance is a vital gateway to an adult artistic career. From adopted Sierra Leone orphan Michaela and Colombian-born Joan Sebastian to military-family prodigy Aran and brother/sister duo Jules and Miko, Kargman's subjects are a uniformly gifted and engaging group. However, their home lives and struggles with a variety of relevant issues—racism, peer discrimination born from gender stereotypes, injuries, anorexia, and the personal and monetary sacrifices made by both children and their parents to chase this dream—are given little more than cursory lip service. The result is a film that eschews in-depth insight in favor of easily digestible who's-going-to-win suspense, a tack that's aided by Kargman's rather poignant (and visually graceful) evocation of pre-performance anxiety but ultimately leaves the material feeling deflated once the winners emerge. (Not Rated) Nick Schager. *Regency Rancho Niguel, Laguna Niguel; Regency South Coast Village, Santa Ana.*

THE FIVE-YEAR ENGAGEMENT *The Five-Year Engagement* is as comfy and cute as the bunny costume Tom (Jason Segel, who co-scripted with director Nicholas Stoller) wears at the New Year's Eve party where he first meets Violet (Emily Blunt). The movie opens in San Francisco, on their one-year anniversary, the night Tom proposes. They postpone the wedding so that they can get settled at the University of Michigan, where Violet has just been accepted to do postdoc research—an adjustment period that involves lame gags with snow and the lack of classy restos worthy of sous-chef Tom's skills. While he makes Reubens at Zingerman's deli, Violet

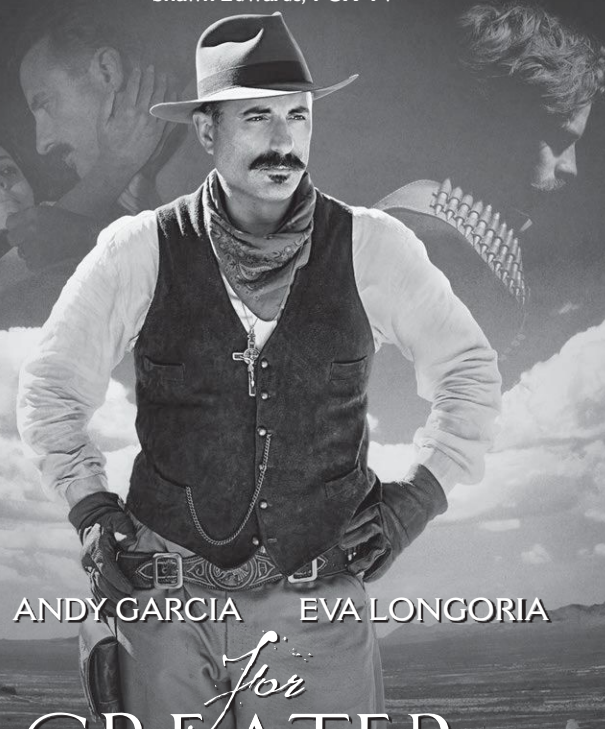
thrives under the academic mentorship of Welsh charmer Winton (Rhys Ifans). When her postdoc is extended, Tom's deepening misery at being stuck in the Wolverine State culminates in extra-curricular drunken kisses, an amputated big toe, and the couple's decision to call it quits—with about 45 minutes to fill before the preordained conclusion. Occasionally, the dialogue in *The Five-Year Engagement* might sound like something an adult audience member has once thought or uttered. "I wanna be alone with you here," Tom pouts to Violet after they've had a fight, and she gets out of bed to respect his request for momentary solitude. This fleeting acknowledgment of the come-here-go-away dynamic of most romantic relationships, serves as the film's most insightful look at attachment at any cost. The rest is much like the doughnuts that Violet uses as a key prop in a research experiment: stale and not good for you. (R) Melissa Anderson. *Countywide.*

THE HUNGER GAMES A withering indictment of endless spectacle, the first volume of Suzanne Collins'

astronomically successful dystopic YA trilogy was inspired, she has said, by flipping the channels from a reality-TV show to footage of the Iraq war. Most of her critique, then, is compromised by the very existence of this big-screen transfer, itself the most anticipated spectacle of the spring. Set in an unspecified, postapocalyptic future, *The Hunger Games* takes place in a nation constructed out of the ruins of North America and consisting of 12 impoverished districts and the prosperous Capitol. As punishment for an earlier uprising, the Capitol demands that one boy and one girl between the ages of 12 and 18 from each district be selected via annual lottery to participate in the Hunger Games. Now in its 74th edition, this televised pageant of nonstop gore documents the randomly drawn teenagers killing each other until only one remains. Representing District 12 is "tribute" Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence), a flinty 16-year-old who recalls the actress' role in *Winter's Bone*. For the film's most difficult visual challenge—depicting the unrelenting violence of the source—

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director Gary Ross and cinematographer Tom Stern smartly deploy rapid cuts and quick shots of the aftermath of the kid-on-kid savagery. Although the film moves briskly and compellingly, it can't match the fury of the book, in which Collins astringently articulates her anger at a culture—ours—indifferent to inequity and war and besotted with its own stupidity. With the focus too much on high-tech gimmickry, that rage and despair are diluted here. (PG-13) Melissa Anderson. *Countywide*.

MEN IN BLACK 3 *Men in Black 3* reunites the series stars Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones with director Barry Sonnenfeld, who, beginning with 1991's *The Addams Family*, has made his fortune on special-effects comedies that could be synopsized and cross-promoted on the side of a 44-ounce fountain drink. Checking in on *Men in Black* 10 years later, the ticket price has changed, but not the product. Agent J (Smith) and Agent K (Jones) have retained their affable younger black guy/tight-assed older white guy repartee. While J is nagging the emotionally constipated K to be more forthcoming, Boris "The Animal" (Jemaine Clement), an intergalactic hellion that K collared and crippled in 1969, is busy busting out of lunar prison. Boris is seeking not only revenge on K, but also a complete do-over of the past 40 years, during which his entire belligerent race was driven to extinction. Boris plans to effect this massive mulligan by traveling back in time to assassinate a young K. To prevent this, J has to preventatively travel to '69 himself, where he partners with a young K (Josh

Brolin, doing a fair TLJ impersonation) and hustles against time to hunt down Boris. The resulting film says practically nothing about the world of 1969, but a great deal about our present-day blockbuster morass. (PG-13) Nick Pinkerton. *Countywide*.

MIGHTY FINE As *Mighty Fine*'s Joe Fine, a businessman who relocates his family from Brooklyn to Louisiana in 1974, Chazz Palminteri rages at everything and anything: at wife Stella (Andie MacDowell) for burning his dinner, at younger daughter Natalie (Jodelle Ferland) for crying over Joe's desire to have their dying dog put down, at older daughter Maddie (Rainey Qualley) for liking boys, and at his business partner (Arthur J. Nascarella) for advising Joe against taking mob loans to prop up a faltering manufacturing operation. It's a veritable festival of fury in Debbie Goodstein's semiautobiographical tale, which despite being narrated by Natalie—who must eventually learn to overcome her fear of public speaking through poetry about her scary paterfamilias—is mainly a showcase for Palminteri to repeatedly let loose on the women in his life. Any relationship between Stella's Holocaust-survival experiences and her willingness to put up with Joe's anger are, like Natalie's fascination with Anne Frank, left undeveloped; *Mighty Fine* is too busy watching Joe threaten teens with his cars and rifles. The mood is generally melodramatic and ends as mushy, aided by the soft-focus cinematography that drenches it all in melancholic nostalgia. (PG-13) Nick Schager. *Edwards University Town Center 6, Irvine*.

SALMON FISHING IN THE YEMEN The kind of benign, swooningly humanist crowd-pleaser Lasse Hallström (*The Cider House Rules*, *Chocolat*) could make in his sleep (and by this point, possibly does), *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen* mostly sacrifices the political satire and epistolary structure of Paul Torday's source novel in favor of cute, if strained, rom-com shenanigans. If you're not getting enough of that from network TV, this movie's for you. *Salmon Fishing*, which sets up its premise and expectations in the title, concerns London fisheries specialist Fred Jones (Ewan McGregor), who's tasked by the prime minister's flack (Kristin Scott Thomas) to export British salmon to a Yemeni river at the request of a sheikh (Amr Waked) with a jones for fly-fishing. The sheikh's real estate assistant (Emily Blunt) tags along to help and, in the process, entices the unhappily married Jones into romance and Hallström-ian self-actualization. The first section of the film deploys chipper barbs at the expense of career bureaucrats, which is funny and effective—Scott Thomas, who brings the raunch, is particularly good—but once McGregor and Blunt start dissecting their complicated feelings for each other, things turn unexpectedly dire. They're a ridiculously attractive and likable couple, but Hallström overwhelms them (and the lush Scottish and Moroccan locations, and us) with his customary brand of lightweight heavy-handedness. (PG-13) Mark Holcomb. *Countywide*.

THINK LIKE A MAN As 2009's dismal *He's Just Not That Into You* showed,

about the only draw of movies based on relationship-advice books—bloating with plot thickets propelled by depressing heterosexual-coupling stratagems and counterattacks that would make even Sun Tzu weep with exhaustion—is watching a few talented performers make do with the worst. Based on Original King of Comedy and *Family Feud* host Steve Harvey's self-help primer *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*, this adaptation by Tim Story (*Fantastic Four*) often plays like a book on tape: The women characters, advising one another about 90-day rules and "controlling the cookie," begin their lines with, "As Steve Harvey says . . ." and the author himself (who also executive produced) frequently pops up, directly addressing the camera and quoting himself. When the male counterparts of four dyads—one long-term couple plus three sets of daters—realize their girlfriends have been putting Harvey's words into action, they strike back with calculations of their own, the manipulations apparently laying the groundwork for fulfilling relationships based on trust and open communication. Enduring a day-long session of couples' therapy is more fun (and flies by faster) than this film, but relief is found whenever Michael Ealy, as a caterer trying to impress Taraji P. Henson's class-conscious CEO, and the redoubtable ham Jennifer Lewis, mother to a worshipful son, are on-screen. (PG-13) Melissa Anderson. *Countywide*.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING Heidi Murkoff's mega-

bestselling manual, *What to Expect When You're Expecting*, actually makes perfect sense as a vehicle for a contemporary Hollywood ensemble comedy. For an industry banked on bathroom humor, what could be more suitable than this vomit-, piss-, fart-, foreskin-, and flabby-vagina-filled tome? But for all the fear and loathing that Murkoff's bedside text engenders, its journey ends with the beginning of a new life, whereas the movie leaves you hoping for a swift end to your own. That feeling has less to do with the terrors of pregnancy than it does with the gargoyles *What to Expect* presents as characters—a tableau of yuppie soullessness, including Cameron Diaz's newly pregnant fitness guru, who upchucks on a reality-TV dance show; Wendy (Elizabeth Banks), a Snuggie-wearing, mom-wannabe who runs a shop called "Breast Choice"; and Holly (Jennifer Lopez), a children's photographer who's hoping to adopt despite the reservations of her callous hubby. Soon, we're cycling through baby bumps, sonograms, and marital melt-downs between irrational alpha gals and their resentful, ineffectual patsies. "I'm the one with the bad eggs," Lopez screams, her justifiable sorrow quickly overtaken by the implicit misogyny that the film's worldview affirms. "I'm the one who can't do the one thing that a woman is supposed to be able to do." Once the babies arrive, the film, much like the culture at large, insists that pleasure ends when parenting begins, yet also that the parenting life is the only one worth living. God forbid there could be something in between. (PG-13) Eric Hynes. *Countywide*.

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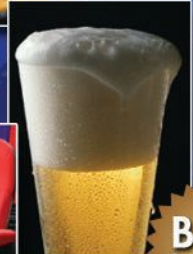
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New Kid on the Old Masters' Block

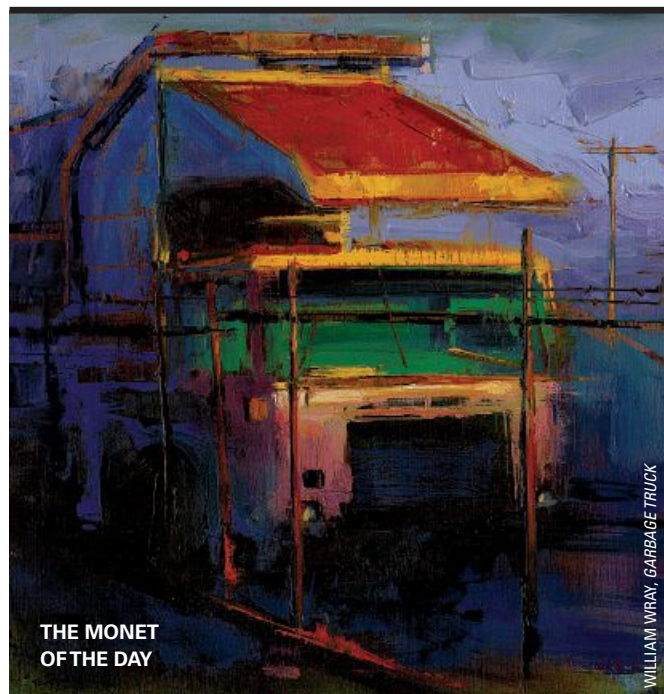
Q Art Salon makes its debut in Santa Ana's Artists Village with a great show

BY DAVE BARTON

Jose Quant, owner and operator of Q Art Salon, doesn't want your money; he just wants you to love the artists he loves, as shown in his grand-opening exhibition, "The Knights Debut," neatly displayed throughout his two-story gallery in Santa Ana's Artists Village.

The most accessible to readers of this infernal rag are the chiaroscuro portraits by the featured quartet's punk-rock Rembrandt, Sean Cheetham. Like the Old Master, he paints his contemporaries, surrounding them in velvety darkness and dim light. Elegantly posed, the male and female models have the regal bearing of the Dutch guy's noblemen, whether leaning against a wall (*Amos*) or inking somebody's arm (*Jason Kundell*), and all wear the armor and accouterments of modern society: leather and torn T-shirts; hair cropped; piercings displayed; adorned with goggles, headphones and hoodies. As example, *Bonne Amie* has all the trappings of a classical figurative painting: semi-nude model reclines on a chaise longue, bookshelves and fireplace in the background suggesting intelligence and stability, but the model sports elaborate chest tattoos, black (possibly dyed) hair and metal studs in her face and nipples, all tiny subversions of the work's OM origins. Unlike the passive nudes of times past, she clearly commands control of the canvases she graces, moving past *Suicide Girls* stroke material to embody a powerful, erotic womanhood.

Discomfort is the specialty of Russian-born painter Alex Kanevsky. In his unnerving "E.O.," a naked woman stands on a white canvas amid a pink wash, her back to us, splotched streaks of paint giving her a set of rabbit ears. It's not *Playboy* that comes to mind while looking at the picture, however, but a female version of *Donnie Darko*, the elongated lobes giving her a discomfiting, small-animal



THE MONET OF THE DAY

WILLIAM WRAY, GARBAGE TRUCK

vulnerability. Kanevsky's subtle *Traveler With Luggage 2* and 3, prints of a woman in a long coat carrying a suitcase, trades on some of the same disturbing territory: It's unclear whether the woman is nude or clothed under her coat; her hair is bobbed in the style of the 1940s; the print mottled like an old, out-of-focus photo, and one can't help but see the similarities between it and any number of Holocaust images. While there is no pain on the face of the posed nude in *JH*, the lower half of her body is awash in a blast of crimson that suggests as much crime scene as portrait sitting. And while the

bisected ribs and marbled interior of an animal carcass in *Interior With Meat* may be hanging in an abattoir or a meat locker, its beautiful butchery is straight out of Francis Bacon's carnival of horrors.

Reminiscent of Edward Hopper's work, Marc Trujillo's paintings of urban fast-food-joint interiors—most identified only by street addresses or the stray corporate logo—are cool canvases of isolation. With rare exceptions, people eat, grimly focused, eyeing their food without so much as a glance at one another, even when couples sit at opposite sides of the same table. That solitude is reinforced with *Meal #6*, his still-life of a Burger King combo on a small, blue tray. Trujillo doesn't even have to show us the person eating it: Its cheap, fatty, salty lack of healthiness is sad statement enough. He's also remarkably adept at capturing the desolation of open spaces, reveling in their loneliness: The night scene of a scoop-light lit Costco food court in 1052 West Burbank Boulevard is

hospital-like in its antiseptic cleanliness... save for a single piece of trash in one corner of the picture.

An entire room of the gallery is devoted to William Wray's exceptional Impressionist paintings. They don't include a single human being and are absolutely mundane in their subject matter—oil derricks, old buildings, cheap motels, pay phones, garbage trucks, parking lots—but he's a brilliant archeologist, discovering and showing us these things as if for the first time; his palette of bright colors elevating grungy and gritty trinkets into evocative relics: *Garbage Truck* brings out the sharp lines in its machine's windshield wipers, hopper and grill, as a patchwork of blue sky and unseen dusk tints and manipulates its pale armor. *Bannister's* greens, purples and whites lend an antique tint to a stairwell leading down, all but disappearing in a washed-out blue light at bottom.

At heart, Q Art Salon's Quant is a fan-boy first and curator second. No obvious philosophical through-line, no consistent theme between artists, no one guiding us to a point of view... under other circumstances, that kind of group show probably wouldn't work for me. What sets this apart is that Quant has a great eye (an established painter, he's good enough to have been part of his own exhibit) and his abundant enthusiasm for the work is infectious; that very personal touch brings us in. I hope other galleries follow his lead.

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TRENDZILLA

»MICHELLE WOO

Instagram-Perfect Weddings

Not too long ago, weddings were simple affairs. Vows, cake, the Electric Slide and a drunken uncle. Done.

Nowadays, not so much. When I was planning my wedding a couple of years ago, I was in awe of the creativity out there—photos on popular wedding blogs looked as though they were plucked straight out of an Anthropologie catalog. So many vintage details! Chalkboards, weathered globes, antique typewriters, old mailboxes—I wondered how brides even found these whimsical treasures. Do they all just happen to have hoarder grandparents who kept amazing loot?

Possibly. Though there's an alternative:

Found Vintage Rentals (www.vintage-rentals.com). For those who want a stylish event with a vintage feel, owner Jeni Maus does the dirty work for you, scouring flea markets, thrift shops and antique shows across the world for one-of-a-kind furniture pieces and décor items. Her airy, 13,000-square-foot warehouse in downtown Fullerton is stocked with everything from button-tufted vintage couches for a cocktail lounge to distressed doors that can be displayed in a woody setting (don't overthink it—it just works). Clients marvel at the selection of charming accessories—steel clocks, vintage suitcases, old gumball machines, colorful bicycles, classic books and quirky wooden letters, all ready to be borrowed and fawned over.

"For a long time, weddings were somewhat sterile," says Maus, who has been collecting vintage goods for 15 years. "There weren't a lot of options out there. It was like, 'These three chairs are what you can get for your ceremony.' But now, brides really want to incorporate their personalities into their

wedding day. We help them create a really relaxed, rustic and comfortable environment."

Maus started Found in 2010 after she had displayed vintage décor in her photography studio, and a wedding planner suggested she rent out the pieces to brides. Since then, she has outfitted weddings and other events throughout Southern California in such places as sandy beaches, farmhouses, industrial venues and cozy back yards. One of her latest events was a *Princess Bride*-inspired wedding photo shoot, complete with a farm-table setup in the middle of a forest. Maus hunts for new inventory every day, making sure her collection stays fresh and exciting. "I'm always looking for statement pieces," she says. "And anything with chippy paint."

Found delivers and sets up the pieces on the big day so couples can sit back and watch their vintage vision come to life. And focus on other important things. Like getting married.

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Dirty Rhymes Reloaded

Rapper Mickey Avalon resumes his unlikely reign over OC's club rap culture

BY DANIEL KOHN

As one of the first musicians to ink a deal with MySpace Records (eventually absorbed into Interscope Records), Mickey Avalon will always wear the mantle of a breakthrough artist whose career owes much to appearing on the right website at the right time. Though his self-titled debut sold decently and produced a cult hit in "Jane Fonda," the rapper found himself mired in battles with his record label over industry politics. And until recently, his recorded output came from mixtape tracks, produced as part of hip-hop trio Dyslexic Speedreaders.

After a six-year gap, Avalon returns with his sophomore album, *Loaded*, released through LA's Suburban Noize Records. Even with the long pause between albums, the 35-year-old rapper (born Yeshe Perl) remains as popular as ever in Orange County, much to his surprise.

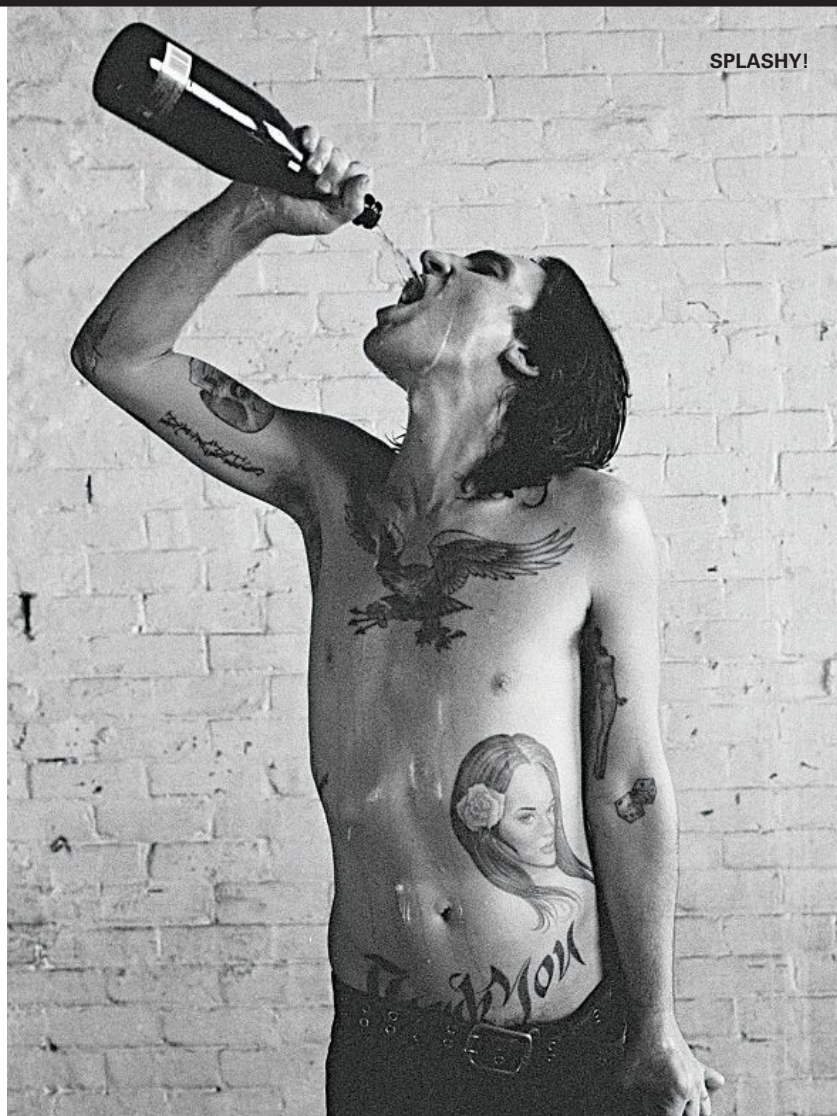
"I don't know how or when it began," Avalon says via telephone before taking his daughter to the zoo in Australia. "But I always do well down there, which is a good thing."

Initially apprehensive about Orange County, thanks to what he admits are misconceived notions about the area as a cultural wasteland, Avalon says he's now a fan, citing his love for the beach and the people. Whether it's the sleek, ultra-lounge atmosphere of Sutra or local haunts such as Detroit Bar, there are plenty of vodka-spilling, diehard fans who've stuck with the slim, tattooed MC six years after he scribbled the "Jane Fonda" lyric about a "girl named Dana from Santa Ana." Avalon says the support from an unlikely fan base has taught him something about himself.

"You have all these codes you grow up with," he explains. "And a lot of it is bullshit, and people are people [no matter] how much money they have or don't have. I'm the asshole who had these wrong ideas about them. Their problems are just as real as anyone else's."

Despite a nasal delivery, audiences find themselves attracted to the rapper's raucous flows and deeply personal lyrics. "I think telling the truth, on some level, is always a good thing," he says. "A lot of the stuff I do is tongue-in-cheek, but underneath it all, there's something that's real and appeals to people."

Loaded continues where his self-titled debut left off. There are tales of seediness, salacious exploits and self-destructive characters, all set to the same catchy beats that made him a popular figure. "I know what I do best and stick with it," Avalon says. "My lyrics don't always have to be autobiographical; there's all this stuff going on in the world, and no one wants to hear me talk



"A lot of the stuff I do is tongue-in-cheek, but underneath it all, there's something that's real and appeals to people."

about having trouble with my record label and stuff like that. I think, through my experiences, I can tell a story about these characters pretty accurately without having to live on Skid Row."

The rapper is already starting to throw around ideas for album three. After six months of touring, he will head back into the studio with producer Mike E. Clark to piece together the next batch of songs. Now that music is more accessible than ever, some artists keep a tight lid on their material to prevent anything from being leaked or released for free. Not Avalon; so long as fans are checking out his live shows, he doesn't care how you get your paws on his music.

"There's a difference between giving someone a photograph of a painting versus the real painting," he says, comparing recording music to a live show. "Going to a live show is like seeing the painting in front of you; you get to fully experience what's going on."

As for his current release, *Loaded* ended up exactly how Avalon envisioned it, and he's excited to share it with his dedicated disciples in Orange County.

"I didn't try to reinvent the wheel or anything like that," he says. "I don't mind being a one-trick pony rather than doing something that's not me. I don't think my fans are coming to judge my vocals or hang onto every note I sing. They're at the show to have a good time and to hear songs, but they're also there to party, which is more than fine by me."

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Ask EXENE

» EXENE CERVENKA

Roommate Madness

DEAR EXENE: I feel as though I'm getting screwed over by my roommate. When we first moved into our little two-bedroom apartment last year, she mentioned that she suffers from some depression, that it can affect her ability to interact with others and that she keeps to herself a lot. I met her through a trusted friend, who has known her for years and vouched for her ability to be a good roommate. But lately, it seems that her depression—which she claimed last month was worsening—is now harming my living standards and my credit. For the past couple of months, she's been horribly late with her portion of the rent, electric bill, cable, you name it. She ducks me constantly, ignores my phone calls and texts, and locks herself in her room with the lights off. I've even considered going to her job to make sure she's still employed. I'm certainly concerned and want to help her out, but I'm also pissed because she seems unwilling to let me into her problems but more than willing to take money out of my wallet to cover her cost of living. Even the friend who introduced us is unsure what to do. I have five months before the lease is up, and I could really use some advice.

Love, Gabby

DEAR GABBY: Maybe your roommate is so depressed she's unable to be responsible for herself, in which case, she needs immediate professional help. Ask her who you can call—family or friends—who could help her. Ask her if she needs to go to a doctor or hospital. If she says no to that, tell her you are going to call a mental-health professional for advice on where to take her to get treatment. If she is depressed and has a history of it, she has a therapist, psychologist or doctor she can call. If she wants treatment, help her to get it. You started your letter with "I feel as though I'm getting screwed over by my roommate." Let's address that now. Whose name is on the lease? (I'm guessing yours.) Does she have family? Friends? A job? Are you all she has right now? Has this happened to her other roommates? If she moves out, do you have another person who could move in? You can't afford—nor should you be subjected to—this behavior, no matter where it's coming from. You will be better able to discern the reality of this situation after you have had the conversation I suggested.

Love, Exene

Exene Cervenka is a writer, visual artist and punk rock pioneer. The OC transplant is the lead singer for X, the Knitters and Original Sinners. If you want to ask the legendary vocalist for advice, send an email to askexene@ocweekly.com.

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Math Rock Magellans

Maps & Atlases' sound journeys
from your brain to your feet

BY REYAN ALI

For a band touting such a heady approach to indie rock, it's surprising Maps & Atlases began with no real plan in mind. Meeting in 2004 at Columbia College Chicago, the quartet started jamming because, in the words of guitarist/vocalist Dave Davison, "it just seemed like something fun to do that would be positive and interesting." Amazingly, given their nimble rhythms and sophisticated guitar work, none of Maps & Atlases' members was a music major, although each did spend countless hours investigating avant-rock icons, finding intellectual solace in artists and songs that eschewed conventional narrative in favor of meandering, instrumental journeys. (Both Davison and guitarist Erin Elders count Ornette Coleman's *The Shape of Jazz to Come* as a major influence.)

What makes their lack of a goal so startling is their material's style sounds as though it grew out of a manifesto. Dexterous guitar tapping, tempo changes and polyrhythms can make room for playfulness, yes, but that's when it's not sounding like a complex piece of machinery completing whatever task it was assigned. Considering Davison's contemplative lyrical content, it's no surprise he and his band mates bonded over their appreciation for the interplanetary songwriting sensibilities of David Bowie and Talking Heads. "We just wanted to make songs that were kind of cinematic-feeling," Davison says. "[The songs were] not necessarily cinematic in overall feel, but cinematic in that they're very visual and continuously moving and weren't necessarily saying, 'Okay, here's where we're starting, and here's what happened, and here's the end.' [They're] just presenting you with a series of ideas."

Evidence of their intent appears on April's *Beware and Be Grateful*, the group's second record on Barsuk Records. In a recent interview with *The Boston Phoenix*, Elders described the album as "a

balance between lightness and darkness."

"On this newest album, we just wanted to make music that was exciting and that people could dance to but also have—relative to our previous work—a different overall feel," Davison says, adding that *Beware and Be Grateful* is "more overtly existential" than previous releases. Maps & Atlases have long enjoyed exploring dichotomies, and their most crucial is trying to find the middle ground between creating music for the brain and music for the feet.

"If you can take an element of something that's just fun and interesting on a basic level, [and] mix those two [ideas], you can have the same benefits of being a band who make really fun dance music."

Davison has his reasons for bringing these two elements together. "If you make a song that's really over-the-top avant-garde and alienating to most people, it's mostly going to just be people who are thinking about it on a really intellectual level, who are watching it for the most part and not necessarily engaging with it," he says. "If you can take an element of something that's just fun and interesting on a basic level, [and] mix those two [ideas], you can have the same benefits of being a band who make really fun dance music."

The end goal, Davison says, is to express common feelings in novel ways that can surprise even the band. "If you can create a new feeling, then that's definitely worth trying."

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6/9 THE TUBES
6/10 DRUMMERS SHOWCASE
6/14 HENRY KAPONO
6/15 DONAVON FRANKENREITER
6/16 DONAVON FRANKENREITER
6/17 RHETT MILLER & The Serial Lady Killers
6/20 VICCI MARTINEZ (The Voice)
6/21 CHERRY POPPIN' DADDIES
6/22 JANIVA MAGNESS
6/23 DSB (Journey Tribute)
6/24 FOXY SHAZAM / Maniac / Cadaver Dogs
6/27 AARON WATSON
6/28 JOHNNY OSBORNE / SPAWNBREEZIE / BUSHMAN
6/29 PET SHARK / UNION OF SAINTS
6/30 ORANGE COUNTY'S FUNNIEST HOUSEWIVES
7/5 ALMA DESNUDA
7/6 JON ANDERSON of YES
7/7 DESPERADO
7/8 GHETTO RESCUE FOUNDATION
7/12 MODERN ENGLISH
7/13 BIG BAD VOODOO DADDY
7/14 MUSIC FOR MEGS BENEFIT

6/9 THE TUBES
6/14 HENRY KAPONO
6/17 RHETT MILLER
6/20 VICCI MARTINEZ
6/24 FOXY SHAZAM
7/6 JON ANDERSON

UPCOMING SHOWS

7/15 HOWARD JONES performing "Human's Lib" & "Dream Into Action"
7/20 BILLY VERA & THE BEATERS
7/21 MELVIN SEALS & JGB CRACKER
7/26 LOS RIOS ROCK SCHOOL
7/28 LEO KOTTKE
8/3 DRAMARAMA
8/11 "HOLLYWOOD BABBLE-ON" with KEVIN SMITH & RALPH GARMAN
8/17 ABBA FAB
8/18 DICK DALE
8/19 GRANDMOTHERS OF INVENTION

8/26 An Evening with ERIC JOHNSON
8/29 MIDNITE
8/30 HAPA
8/31 DAVID ALLAN COE
9/1 STEVE TYRELL
9/7 JOHN HIATT & THE COMBO
9/8 THE MOTHER HIPPS
9/15 THE ULTIMATE STONES
9/23 PONCHO SANCHEZ
10/3 KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD
10/6 DEBBIE REYNOLDS
10/31 COLT FORD
11/11 ASIA (original members)

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THE ASIAN OSMONDS MEET THE HANGOVER GUYS



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Riff Rock Redux

KARMA THE MIRROR

perform with Douglas and the Furs at Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 642-0600; www.detroitbar.com. June 5, 9 p.m. Free. 21+.

Ask the members of Karma the Mirror what their band sounds like, and they're quick to tell you it's a reflection of everything happening around them. Steeped in the melting pot of the Fullerton music scene, the band's guitar-driven sensibility is coated with a dripping-wet amalgam of dream pop, dance punk and echo-drenched effects. We spoke with guitarist/vocalist Kevin Brady and guitarist Tyler Long as they were wrapping up their first year together by completing an as-of-yet-untitled debut album. Meanwhile, Karma continue to make a name for themselves in dens of debauchery where no bouncer is required—warehouse parties and backyard shows—with an occasional jam session in random spots such as a flatbed truck in front of a Mexican-food chain restaurant.

OC Weekly: We hear the band went on a rare excursion outside OC to play Las Vegas last weekend?

Kevin Brady: Yeah, it was kind of random. We went there to play a grand opening for a Wahoo's Fish Taco. It was sort of like a family event. It was set up a little weird; we played on this big flatbed truck that was built [into] a stage.

Did it get crazy out there?

Brady: At one point during the weekend, all I remember is Tyler doing crazy doughnuts in his Chevy Tahoe in the middle of the desert with six people in the car and somebody in the trunk.

Tyler Long: It was the drummer's girlfriend, whom he decided to bring along. We pretty much just partied the entire weekend.

Brady: We were scrounging at, like, 4 or 5 in the morning on [Saturday] trying to find a hotel room. We ended up staying at Excalibur, which tells you how bad our situation was.

You guys have been in a couple of different bands in the Fullerton music scene. How does Karma the Mirror reflect that journey?

Brady: Tyler and I work pretty hard on the band. We were in this band called Glass Puppets for a while, and when that broke up, I knew I wanted to keep playing with Tyler. He was already playing in a previous version of Karma the Mirror before I even got there, and I saw them play at a house party and knew I had to play with them. It's changed a lot since we first started. We finally understand how to play with one another, but at the same time, we don't take ourselves too seriously. When we release our album, you'll be able to tell because all the song titles are bullshit names.

Because both of you come up with lyrics, describe the dynamic of having two writers in the band.

Brady: I love the way Tyler writes—way better than the way I write. He writes stuff that makes chicks swoon. [Laughs.] I don't even know where he gets it from; it seems like he's high all the time, but his lyrics are super-easy to relate to. When I write, I'll be going through something, and I'll put a bunch of words down that match the mood of the song, but I won't put the meaning together right away. We just put out a video for a song we did called "Lost In Time" and that I just now realized what that's about.

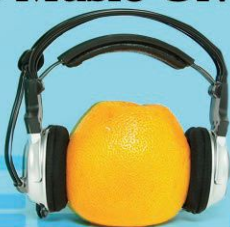
You tend to stray from the retro revival of a lot of local indie bands. What do you think makes you stand out?

Brady: It's funny because we actually have a lot of the same influences as a lot of the bands around us; we tend to take a little bit from each band we're friends with or we encounter at shows. We're not really trying to start a new genre. It's just an attempt to mix it up and have fun with it.

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MUSIC CALENDAR

THURSDAY 5/31
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FRIDAY 6/1 **THE JUKEBOX BAILOUT**
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KADILLAK KAZ
AKOMA**

Friday, June 1st
Static
FRIDAYS

Saturday, June 2nd
**CAPITAL CITIES
MIDI MATILDA**

Sunday, June 3rd
OPERA ON TAP

Monday, June 4th
TIME AND ENERGY (NO COVER)

Tuesday, June 5th
Live & Local
Tuesdays

Wednesday, June 6th
CAPPADONNA

concert*guide

this week

THURSDAY, MAY 31

BAD SEED FACULTY: Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-0600, www.detroitbar.com.

LEE ADAMS & THE DIRTY MARTINIS: 7 p.m., \$5. DiPiazza's Restaurant & Lounge, 5205 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-498-2461, www.dipiazas.com.

MARSHALL TUCKER: The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.

SANTIGOLD; CHARLI XCX: 8 p.m., \$25 in advance. House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

STRIP STRIP HOORAY: \$35-\$60. The Yost Theater, 307 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana, 888-862-9573, www.yosttheater.com.

SUBURBAN SPAWN: 9 p.m., \$5. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbars.com.

FRIDAY, JUNE 1

EVERLAST: 8 p.m., \$15. The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.

GRIEVES AND BUDO: Constellation Room at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.constellationroom.com.

THE SECRET AFFAIR: 9 p.m., \$5. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbars.com.

TRICIA FREEMAN: Free. Marine Room Tavern, 214 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-494-3027.

WILD CHILD: 8 p.m. House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

SATURDAY, JUNE 2

CAPITAL CITIES: 9 p.m., \$10. Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-0600, www.detroitbar.com.

HE IS WE: 7 p.m., \$12 in advance. Chain Reaction, 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, 714-635-6067, www.allages.com.

JOHN AVENUE BLUES BAND: 6:30 p.m., \$3. DiPiazza's Restaurant & Lounge, 5205 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-498-2461, www.dipiazas.com.

MEXIKA: 7:30 p.m., free. Viento y Agua Gallery, 4007 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-434-1182, www.vientoyaguacoffeehouse.com.

3RD ANNUAL WEST COAST ROCKABILLY SHOWDOWN: Noon, free with canned-food donation. Orange County Market Place, 88 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa, 714-267-6777, www.ocmarketplace.com.

SUNDAY, JUNE 3

THE BEACH BOYS 50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR: 7 p.m., \$32.50-\$112.25. Verizon Wireless Amphitheater, 8808 Irvine Center Dr., Irvine, 213-480-3232.

THREE LEGGED FOX: 6 p.m., free. Tiki Bar, 1700 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-548-3533, www.tikibaroc.com.

MONDAY, JUNE 4

COSMIC SLOP: 9 p.m., free. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbars.com.

TUESDAY, JUNE 5

LONG BEACH CARAVAN TRIO: 8 p.m., free. The Pike Bar & Fish Grill, 1836 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-437-4453, www.pikelongbeach.com.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6

CAPPADONNA: 9 p.m., \$12 in advance. Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-0600, www.detroitbar.com.

JULIA NUNES: 9 p.m., \$13. Constellation Room at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.constellationroom.com.

MICKEY AVALON: 8 p.m., \$25. The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.

SENSE FIELD: 9 p.m., free. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com.

UNKNOWN HINSON: 9 p.m., \$18. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbars.com.

THURSDAY, JUNE 7

INTO ANOTHER; GAMEFACE: The Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona, 909-865-3802, www.theglasshouse.us.

THE MAINE: 7 p.m., \$20. City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, 714-712-2750, www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com.

MAPS & ATLASES: Constellation Room at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.constellationroom.com.

PATO BANTON: 8 p.m., \$15. The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.

club*guide

rock

BACK ALLEY BAR & GRILL: 116 1/2 W. Wilshire Ave., Ste. C, Fullerton, 714-526-3032, www.myspace.com/backalleyfullerton. **Thu:** 9 p.m., '80s Enough, free.

GALLAGHER'S PUB & GRILL: 300 Pacific Coast Hwy., Ste. 113, Huntington Beach, 714-536-2422, www.gallagherpub.com. **Mon:** 9 p.m., Boardnight, free.

GASLAMP RESTAURANT & BAR: 6251 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-596-4718, www.thegaslamprestaurant.com. **Fri:** 5 p.m., Knyght Rider. **Sat:** 5 p.m., The Thuggs.

HOUSE OF BLUES: 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim. **Sun:** 10 a.m. & 1 p.m., Gospel Brunch, \$16.50-\$36.

MARINE ROOM TAVERN: 214 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-494-3027. **Tue:** 8 p.m., Beth Fitchet Wood Songwriters Showcase, free.

MARLIN BAR & GRILL: 16651 Gothard St., Huntington Beach, 714-842-5587, www.marlinbarhb.com. **Fri:** 8:30 p.m., The Mids.

jazz

BAYSIDE RESTAURANT: 900 Bayside Dr., Newport Beach, 949-721-1222, www.baysiderestaurant.com. **Thu:** 6:30 p.m., Ron Kobayashi Trio, free.

BRUSSELS BISTRO: 222 Forest Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-376-7955, www.brusselsbistro.com. **Tue:** 7 p.m., Jennifer Hart & Llew Matthews, free.

GRAND ROMANCE RIVER BOAT: 200 Aquarium Way, Dock No. 4, Long Beach, 562-628-1600, www.grandromance.com. **Sun:** 1 p.m., New Orleans Barbeque, \$30.

THE GYPSY DEN: 125 N. Broadway Ave., Santa Ana, 714-835-8840, www.gypsyden.com. **Wed:** 7 p.m., Django Jam and Swing, free.

HOTEL LAGUNA: 425 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-494-1151, www.lagunabeachlive.org. **Sat:** 8 p.m., Elizabeth Lamers, jazz vocalist with trio.

RALPH BRENNAN'S JAZZ KITCHEN: 1590 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-776-5200, www.rbjazzkitchen.com. **Thu:** 6:30-10 p.m., Just the 2 of Us, free. **Fri-Sat:** 7 p.m., Kenny Sara & the Sounds of New Orleans, free.

SAVANNAH STEAK & CHOP HOUSE: 32441 St. of the Golden Lantern, Laguna Niguel, 949-493-7107, www.savannahchophouse.net. **Tue-Wed:** 6:30 p.m., Le Grand Barr.

STEAMERS JAZZ CLUB: 138 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-8800, www.steamerscafe.com. **Sun:** 8 p.m., Evan Stone's Jazz Jam, free.

blues

HARVELLE'S LONG BEACH: 201 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-239-3700. **Thu:** The Toledo Show.

HOUSE OF BLUES: 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim. **Thu:** 10 p.m., Rockin' the Blues, free.

THE PUKA BAR: 710 W. Willow St., Long Beach, 562-997-6896, www.pukabar.com. **Sun:** 5 p.m., Pro Blues & Rock Jam, free.

dance

ALEX'S BAR: 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbars.com. **Wed:** 9 p.m., Sugarlight Girls.

CLUB RIPPLES: 5101 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, 562-433-0357, www.clubripples.com. **Fri:** 9 p.m., Unzipped, girls, girls, girls. **Sun:** Sunday Funday, free. **Mon:** 9 p.m., Sin, with DJ Ernie Pearl. **Tue:** 9 p.m., Tippy Tuesday.

THE EXECUTIVE SUITE: 3428 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-597-3884. **Fri:** 9 p.m., Boy's Room, hosted by TigerHeat and POPplanet, \$6.

SHARK CLUB: 841 Baker St., Costa Mesa, 714-751-6428, www.sharkclub.com. **Sat:** 9 p.m., Scene Saturdays, pop, rock, hip-hop and breakbeats.

TIME OUT TAVERN & NIGHT CLUB: 27822 Aliso Creek Rd., Aliso Viejo, 949-362-5919, www.timeoutsportsnightclub.com. **Tue-Sat:** DJs and Dancing. **Fri:** 7 p.m., Ashes to Funk.

VELVET LOUNGE: 416 W. Fourth St., Santa Ana, 714-664-0663, www.velvetoc.com. **Fri:** Flex Friday.

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XALOS BAR: 1160 N. Kraemer Blvd., Anaheim, 714-632-0390, www.xalosbar.com. **Fri:** 9 p.m., X-Lounge, featuring DJ Santa Rosa.

country

GASLAMP RESTAURANT & BAR: 6251 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-596-4718, www.thegaslamprestaurant.com. **Tue:** 5 p.m., Live Country Music, free.

HAMBURGER MARY'S: 740 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-436-7900, www.hamburgermaryslb.com. **Sat:** 2 p.m., Line Dancing Mania, \$10.

IN CAHOOTS/CLUB RIO: 1401 S. Lemon, Fullerton, 714-525-9700, www.ocincahoots.com. **Fri:** 5 p.m., Country Fridays, \$5. **Wed:** 6 p.m., Redneck Wednesdays, live bands, drink specials and line-dance lessons, free.

reggae

HOUSE OF BLUES: 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim. **Sat:** 9 a.m., Reggae Brunch, \$12.95-\$24.95.

MOZAMBIQUE: 1740 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-715-7777, www.mozambiqueoc.com. **Sun:** 7 p.m., Reggae Sundays, free.

dj

ANARCHY LIBRARY: 13250 Woodruff Ave., Downey, 562-803-9134, www.theanarchylibrary.com. **Sun:** 8 p.m., \$3 Sundays, DJs playing '60s garage, '70s punk, '80s new wave, '90s indie and your requests, free.

AVALON BAR: 820 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-515-4650, www.myspace.com/theavalonbar. **Tue:** 10 p.m., Solid State, free.

BACK ALLEY BAR & GRILL: 116 1/2 W. Wilshire Ave., Ste. C, Fullerton, 714-526-3032, www.myspace.com/backalleyfullerton. **Mon:** 8 p.m., DJ Souless, free.

BLUE LAGUNA: 696 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-376-2583, www.bluelagunaoc.com. **Fri:** 9 p.m., Ladies' Night. **Sat:** 9 p.m., DJs Brothers From Another, free. **Wed:** 8 p.m., DJ Bodeez, free.

COHIBA NIGHTCLUB AND CIGAR LOUNGE: 110 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-491-5220, www.cohibalongbeach.com. **Fri, Sat:** 9 p.m., Hip-hop, R&B, and Top 40, \$20. **Mon:** 9 p.m.; **Tue:** 9 p.m., DJ, hip-hop, and R&B, free.

COMMONWEALTH LOUNGE: 112 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-525-8888, www.commonwealthlounge.com. **Thu:** 5 p.m., Ladies' Night, with DJ Cocoe, free. **Sat:** 9 p.m., DJ Lito.

THE CROSBY: 400 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, 714-543-3543, www.thisisthecrosby.com. **Tue:** 10 p.m., Psychic Wave Laboratories, free. **Thu:** 10 p.m., Shift, free.

GALLAGHER'S PUB & GRILL: 300 Pacific Coast Hwy., Ste. 113, Huntington Beach, 714-536-2422, www.gallagherspab.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., DJ Richard Wayne, free.

HAMBURGER MARY'S: 740 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-436-7900, www.hamburgermaryslb.com. **Fri:** Boybar.

HURRICANES BAR & GRILL: 200 Main St., Huntington Beach, 714-374-0500, www.hurricanesbargrill.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., DJ Dime, free. **Fri:** 9 p.m., DJ Curse, \$5. **Sat:** 9 p.m., DJ Justin, \$5. **Wed:** 9 p.m., DJ Gil, free.

KAVIKAS GRILL & BAR: 95 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, 562-432-8700, www.kavikas.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., Retrospect, \$5. **Fri:** 10 p.m., Sexy Fridays.

KITSCH BAR: 891 Baker St., Ste. A10, Costa Mesa, 714-546-8580, www.kitschbar.com. **Tue-Thu:** 9 p.m., DJ 5 Disk, free. **Fri:** 9 p.m., DJ Anthony, free. **Sat:** 9 p.m., DJs Jon & Edwin, free.

LA CAVE: 1695 Irvine Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-646-7944, www.lacaverestaurant.com. **Wed:** 10 p.m., La Cave Wednesdays, with DJ Kedd Cook, free.

THE LAB ANTI-MALL: 2930 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, 714-966-6660, www.thelab.com. **Fri:** 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., KUCI DJs, free.

LANDMARK STEAK HOUSE: 3520 E. Coast Hwy., Corona Del Mar, 949-675-5556, www.landmarknewport.com. **Thu-Sat:** 10 p.m., After Dinner DJ.

LIQUID LOUNGE: 3522 E. Anaheim St., Anaheim, 562-494-7564, www.liquidloungealongbeach.com. **Wed:** 8 p.m., DJ Dizzy vs. the Beer Barons, free.

MAI TAI BAR: 97 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, 562-435-1200, www.maitaibar.com. **Fri:** 9:30 p.m., Thank Goose It's Friday. **Sat:** 9:30 p.m., House Party.

MEMPHIS AT THE SANTORA: 201 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, 714-564-1064, www.memphiscafe.com/santora/. **Fri:** 10 p.m., Downtown Sound, local DJs spin rock, funk, soul, country and everything in between.

MEMPHIS SOUL CAFE: 2920 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, 714-432-7685, www.memphiscafe.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m. Goldie's Thursday Night Hangout, free; **Thu:** 10 p.m., University of Groove, free.

MOSUN/CLUB M: 680 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-497-5646, www.mosunclubm.com. **Fri:** 9 p.m., Club Rhythm, \$10.

OCEAN AVENUE RESTAURANT AND BREWERY: 237 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-497-3381, www.oceanbrewing.com. **Fri-Sat:** 9:30 p.m., DJ Nights. **Tue:** 9:30 p.m., Throwback Tuesdays.

ORIGINAL MIKE'S: 100 S. Main St., Santa Ana, 714-550-7764, www.originalmikes.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., College Night, bike night and cigar club, free.

THE PIKE BAR & FISH GRILL: 1836 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-437-4453, www.pikelongbeach.com. **Sat:** June 2, 9 p.m., DJ Edgar, free.

PROOF BAR: 215 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, 714-953-2660, www.proofbar.com. **Sun:** 9 p.m., Wreck Hall, free.

SEVILLA NIGHT CLUB: 140 Pine Ave., Long Beach, 562-495-1111, www.sevillanightclub.com. **Thu:** Mecca, 18+, \$5; \$15 after 10 p.m. **Fri:** 9 p.m., Spot. **Sat:** 9 p.m., Saturdays Belong to Sevilla, 21+.

SHARKEEZ: 211 Main St., Huntington Beach, 714-960-5282, www.sharkeez.net. **Tue:** 9 p.m., 99 Tuesdays, '90s-themed party, free.

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TAPAS FLAVORS OF SPAIN: 4253 Martingale Way, Newport Beach, 949-756-8194, www.tapasflavorsospain.com. **Tue:** 9:30 p.m., Focus Tuesdays, \$10.50.

TIKI BAR: 1700 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-548-3533, www.tikibaroc.com. **Wed:** 9 p.m., Upgrade Drum & Bass, free.

VELVET LOUNGE: 416 W. Fourth St., Santa Ana, 714-664-0663, www.velvetoc.com. **Thu:** 10:30 p.m. Caliente, DJ Erikson, free.

WOODY'S WHARF: 2318 Newport Blvd., Newport Beach, 949-675-0474, www.woodyswharf.com. **Thu:** 10 p.m., Action Thursdays, free.

drag

CLUB RIPPLES: 5101 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, 562-433-0357, www.clubripples.com. **Thu:** 8 p.m., The Dreamgirls Revue.

VELVET LOUNGE: 416 W. Fourth St., Santa Ana, 714-664-0663, www.velvetoc.com. **Mon:** 6 p.m., Musical Mondays, free. **Wed:** 10 p.m., Club Cherry, ladies' night.

eclectic

ALOHA GRILL: 222 Main St., Ste. 110, Huntington Beach, 714-374-4427, www.alohagrill.com. **Fri-Sun:** 5 p.m., Live Music, free.

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THE PIKE BAR & FISH GRILL: 1836 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-437-4453, www.pikelongbeach.com. **Sun:** 6-9 p.m., iPod Sundays, bring your own music and show off those awesome playlist skills, free.

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BRAVO NIGHT CLUB: 1490 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, 714-533-2291, www.clubbravo.com. **Fri:** 8 p.m., Metropolis, ladies free before 10 p.m.

Sat: 9 p.m., Alternative Saturday. **Sun:** 11 p.m., El Chamber. **Wed:** 9 p.m., Splash.

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SHORE ULTRA LOUNGE: 6200 E. Second St., Long Beach, 562-252-8434, www.shoreultralounge.com. **Mon:** 8 p.m., Salsa Mondays.

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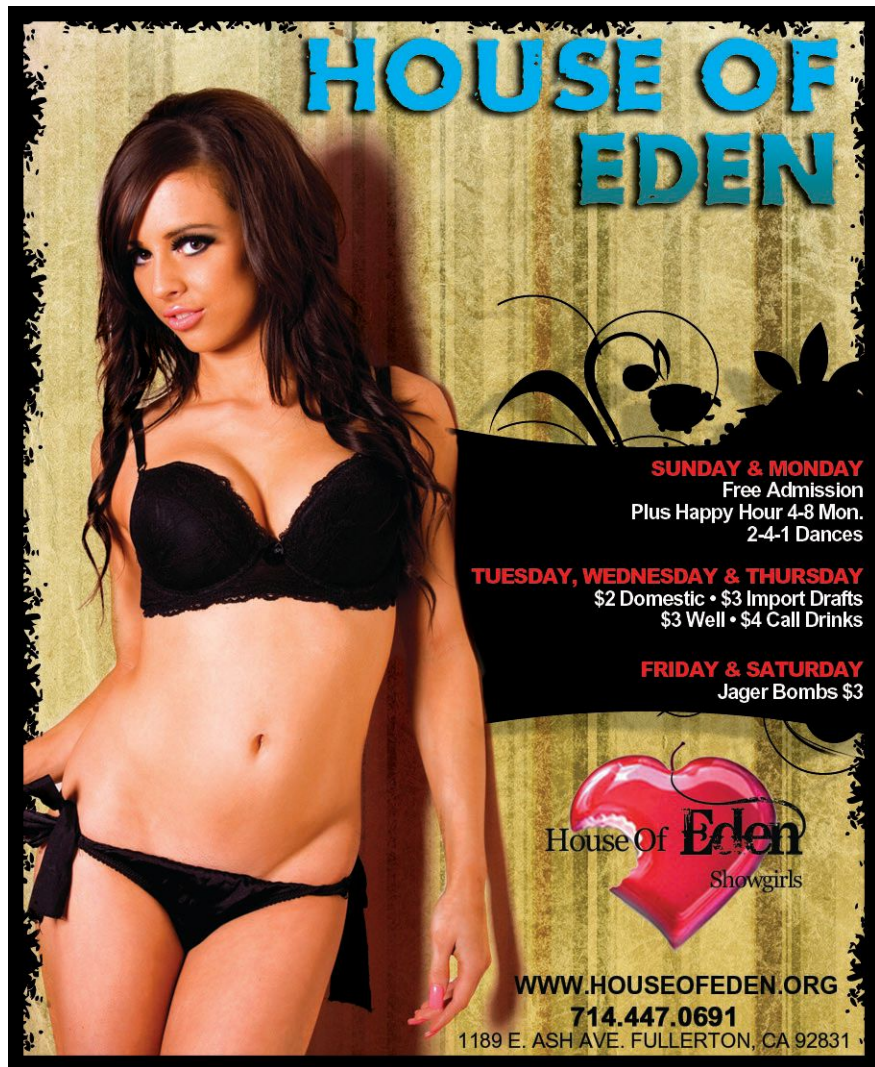
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I'm a straight male from Southern California, and I really want to be a straight-male escort. The problem is the industry is shrouded with deceptive "agencies" that take advantage of the situation. Also, it's not like there's a Male Escort 101 course that I can take to learn how to avoid these traps. I don't know if you can help, but I really want to get into this industry, hopefully through a reputable agency. Do you have any advice, can you put me in touch with any male escorts (preferably straight ones) so I can pick their brains, and do you know of a reputable agency in my area?

Seeking The Upright Deal

"There is no gigolo industry," says Dominick, the former escort who writes Ask Dominick, an advice column for male escorts and male-escort wannabes at Rentboy.com, a gay escort-listings site. While Dominick's column focuses on issues that gay escorts confront, it's the "Male Escort 101" course you've been looking for.

"What STUD is seeking is a fantasy—one that has been fueled by cultural products such as *American Gigolo* and HBO's *Hung*," says Dominick. There are no reputable agencies in Southern California—or anywhere else—that book male escorts to see female clients, just as there are no websites similar to Rentboy.com for straight-male escorts. "The fact of the matter is, almost all clients for escorts are male—whether they're looking for male, female or transgender escorts."

Dominick speaks from experience: When he was working as an escort in New York City, his ads stated that he was available for male or female clients. "Over three years, I went on exactly one call with a female client, an attractive older woman who seemed to be working through some intimacy issues," says Dominick, "and one call with a married couple for a cuckolding scene, which was initiated by the husband. During that same period, I averaged about 5.5 calls per week with men. That gives you a measure of the demand from female clients."

And no demand from female clients means no escort agencies and no Rentboy.com-style websites—at least no legit ones—for straight-male escorts.

"Because there are many more men clamoring to be gigolos than there is actual demand for gigolos," adds Dominick, "shadowy scam agencies come and go, 'guaranteeing' bookings with female clients to gullible young bucks—in exchange for monthly listing fees. That said, if there are any legitimate agencies out there, they are likely to be in New York or Los Angeles. A quick Google search produced two agencies in LA: One had dozens of females and just two men, the other had a stable of six straight-male escorts, charging posted rates of \$200 to \$300 per hour. I won't provide the links, since I have no idea how reputable these agencies are, but you can find them yourself in 0.25 seconds on Google."

Another option: listing yourself as a "sexual healer" at a new-age site such as Sacrederos.com.

"That site lists male and female sexual healers, for male and female clients, for such services as coaching, tantric awakening and sensual massage. If this is a direction you are thinking about, have at it," says Dominick. "Otherwise, my advice to you is to pursue a profession with the potential to bring you into contact with a wealthy female clientele—business consultant, art handler—and be exceptionally good and loving to all the women in your life."

You can read Dominick's column at Rentboy.com. He has also written for the Red Umbrella Diaries, a sex workers' reading series in New York City. It takes place on the first Thursday of every month at Happy Ending. Dominick is curating the October Red Umbrella Diaries, and sex workers—escort, massage, porn, phone, stripper—with stories to tell can email him at askdominick@gmail.com.

I'm a 22-year-old female, and I lost my virginity in September 2011, but I had experienced everything else before that. My question is about when a guy goes down on me: How come I can never fully enjoy it? How come I find it hard to enjoy any aspect of it? Is the problem that I've never experienced oral with someone who knows what he's doing? Or is it my own mental block? What I mean by "mental block" is this: I personally think it's gross, and I can't imagine why a guy would want to do that to me. So the entire time he's down there, I'm stressing out about whether he really likes it. I try to focus on relaxing and blocking those thoughts out, but in the end, I always end up pulling his head back up, since I don't see myself ever experiencing an orgasm during it, and frankly, I get bored.

Is it my mental block that's stopping me from enjoying oral? Or am I just having bad luck with guys in that area?

Erotic Anxiety Time

The only way to determine what exactly your problem is—your pussy-paralyzing insecurities? Their pussy-disabling ineptitude?—is to work on conquering your insecurities while at the same time allowing the guy(s) you're seeing to go down on you once in a while. If you get over your insecurities about your genitals, and then oral—even inept oral—is suddenly awesome, well, then the problem was your insecurities. If you don't get over your insecurities but find yourself coming like crazy with a new boy between your legs, well, then they—all the other boys who ever ate your pussy—were the problem.

And it's fine for you to think eating pussy is gross—you're a straight girl, after all, and you're not attracted to women. But guys who dig women, dig pussy, and you don't have to like the idea of eating pussy to enjoy having yours eaten.

I am a 26-year-old straight girl and a virgin. I could delve into the reasons why (shy, late bloomer, average-looking, conservative family), but I will spare you and cut to the chase: I really, really want to lose my virginity. It's driving me crazy! All I want is a safe, anonymous one-time thing so I can move on, and I'm not outgoing/flirtatious/pretty enough to meet men at bars. My question: Straight-male escorts—do they exist? How would I find one? Some people were talking about escorts as an option in a recent column, and being with someone understanding, experienced and professional sounds like exactly what I'm looking for. Honestly, I've thought about this for awhile. I don't think people who develop normally can really understand the sort of desperation I feel.

Very Concerned About Retarded Development

Wannabe straight-male escorts exist, as STUD's letter proves. But there aren't enough straight-female wannabe clients out there to support a straight-female-specific website or agency for straight-male escorts, as Dominick's response to STUD proves. However, a lot of the male escorts on gay-specific escort websites are bisexual; some are even highly heteroflexible gay-for-pay straight guys. Spend some time dinking around on a gay escort site, and it won't be long before you run across an ad posted by a male escort who identifies as bi. The guy could be lying—some gay escorts will claim to be straight or bi to attract gay male clients who get off on sleeping with straight guys—so you may not hear back from the first bi or straight escort you send an email to. But keep looking, email any guy who strikes your fancy, and be upfront about who you are and what you're looking for.

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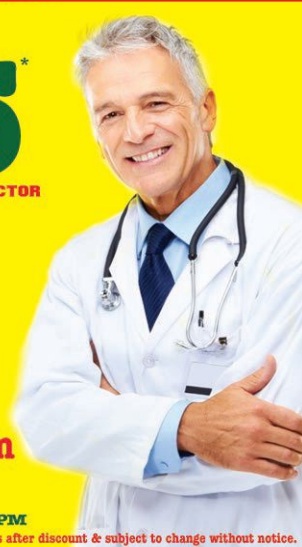
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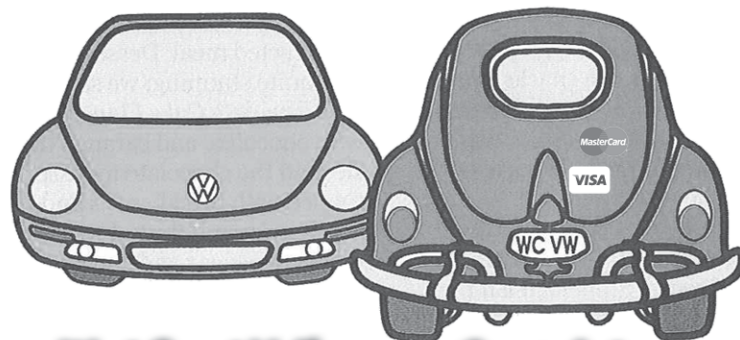
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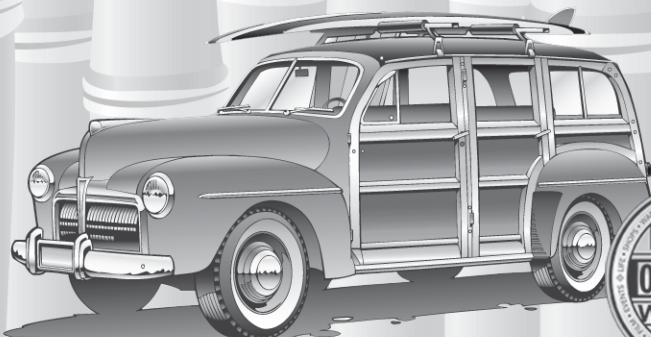
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Dennis Roger Reed 3:00 pm • Conjunto Los Pochos 2:00 pm

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www.HeritageMuseumOC.org



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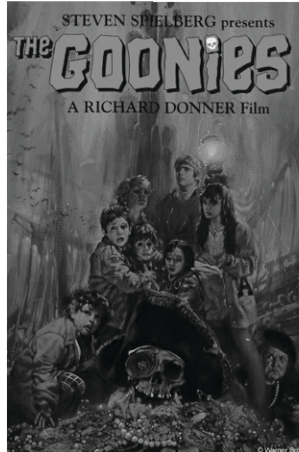
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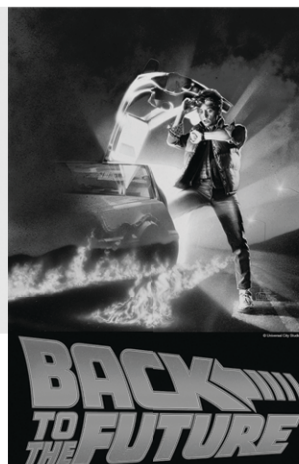
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JUNE 23RD
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Saturday
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